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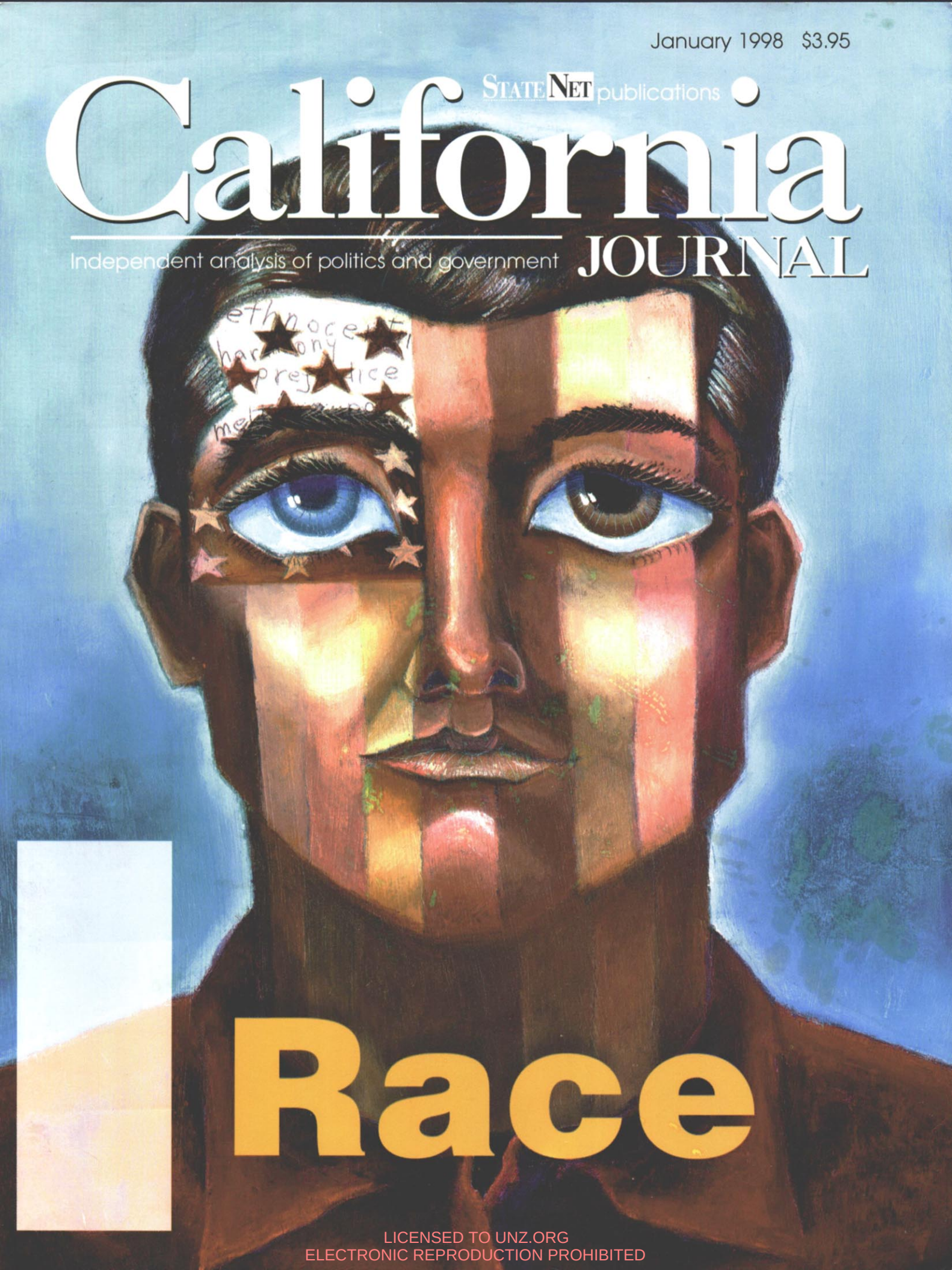
Independent analysis of politics and government



Race

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California JOURNAL
Independent analysis of politics and government

JANUARY 1998
VOLUME XXIX, NUMBER 1

While the nation's political leaders ponder the continuing divide between black and white, Californians face the more complicated task of reconciling racial divisions across many cultura lines. This month's *California Journal* devotes its pages to a consideration of race in California — where it divides us and how well we cope with those divisions.

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Illustration by Santiago Uceda

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Upfront

umbrage

The road less traveled. There's a vicious rumor going around that "the media" isn't interested in covering the substance in political campaigns, only the sleaze. The traditional response (usually made after a gratuitous reference to Bill Clinton's "identifying mark") goes something like this: "Show me some substance in the campaign, and I'll cover it." Well, one gubernatorial candidate has decided to at least take a whack at it. State Senator John Vasconcellos (D-San Jose), "exploratory" candidate for governor, recently laid out a detailed, nine-point program, chock full of specific suggestions and promises to "walk the talk" if elected. Oh, Lord, you're thinking: *another* multi-point program? Well, think again. This one addresses a subject nobody, but nobody else in the race has touched — race. To be sure, the approach to race favored in Vasco's first "Blueprint for our Golden State" is long on the sort of touchy-feely "let's all just talk" strategies reminiscent of his self-esteem commission. But at least it's a serious, considered attempt. Line this up alongside the rest of the gubernatorial field, whose collective approach to race can be pretty much summed up as, "I won't be like Pete Wilson." One need not endorse Vasconcellos' specifics to give him credit for stepping up to take a swing at the "Nolan Ryan fastball" of political issues.

The race card.

Apparently, Willie Brown is jealous of Los Angeles. The City of Angels has spent most of the last five years riven by racial animus and mistrust thanks to the Rodney King beating and the O.J. Simpson case. Brown, it seems, wants a piece of that action for his city. How else to explain Da Mayor's initial response to the choking incident involving Golden State Warriors basketball star Latrell Sprewell. Days after Sprewell was fired by the Warriors and suspended by the National Basketball Association for trying to strangle coach P.J. Carlesimo, Brown came galloping to his defense. "His boss may have needed choking," said Brown, who also called for investigations by the NAACP, the Reverend Jesse Jackson and others. Blistered by the reaction to his comments, Da Mayor quickly backpedaled, finally ending up by suggesting it was an issue of due process and "workplace violence." When Sprewell appeared to make his own *mea culpa,* however, there was Johnnie Cochran, the celebrated attorney who successfully interjected race into the Simpson defense. Accepting, for the moment, the contention that it is impossible to divorce incidents such as this from the question of race, there is still a question that burns in the wake of the incident. One of the most venal of modern-day stereotypes about blacks in the media and elsewhere is that they are somehow all just one step up from the gang-banging streets. Sprewell's action gives aid and comfort to the hate mongers who spread this perception, and yet who does Willie Brown blame? The guy with the welts on his neck. It is perplexing to find Brown, who has spent much of his career trying to elevate the standing of African Americans in politics and society, siding with someone whose actions reinforce the worst elements of an ugly stereotype.

Friends like these. Next year, when Republican statewide candidates make nice for one of those hand-clasping photo ops, there may be an open space in the chorus line. Attorney General Dan Lungren, the GOP's designated heir to the governorship, has had what was discretely referred to as a "falling out" with state Insurance Commissioner Charles Quackenbush. According to *The Sacramento Bee,* Lungren's gubernatorial campaign had actually solicited two $5,000 campaign contributions from the Golden Eagle Insurance Company, subject of a $1.3 billion takeover bid by Quackenbush's Department of Insurance. By a remarkable coincidence, Lungren's office subsequently withdrew from the ongoing court case between Golden Eagle and the department. Lungren's chief of staff was quoted in *The Bee* describing the sequence of events as "a routine matter ... not something that was of major importance." In a state court filing, Quackenbush said Lungren had committed a "clear and undeniable breach" of professional ethics by soliciting and accepting the contribution without first contacting the Department, Lungren's "client" in the case. Now cynics might suggest that Quackenbush was mostly upset that someone other than he had received insurance money, but the commish makes a good point. If a $1.3 billion insurance case is a "routine matter" for Lungren's shop, what, pray tell, constitutes a matter of "major importance." Also amusing was the response of Team Lungren to Quackenbush: Ignoring the unseemly appearance of the affair, Lungren's chief of staff simply said Quackenbush was using "poor legal analysis." Hmmm. Sounds like Vice President's Al Gore's infamous "no controlling legal authority" line. So now we know the Lungren campaign's fund-raising theme song: "You Can Call Me Al."

"Politics offers yesterday's answers to today's problems."
— Marshall McLuhan

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A.G. Block

Managing Editor
Steve Scott

Associate Editors
Sigrid Bathen, Claudia Buck, Cynthia Craft

Assistant Editors
Noel Brinkerhoff, Kathleen Les, Melanie Smith

Contributing Editors
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Editorial Assistant
Sean J. Campbell

Circulation
Tina Foster

Art Director
Dagmar Thompson

Art Staff
Suzanne Raney

Advertising Director
Mary Foy
(916) 422-1377

Advertising Coordinator
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Two Cents
commentary

A color-blind society

This issue of *California Journal* is dedicated to the subject of race. It is a fitting way to begin a year dominated by election coverage, including the campaign for a new governor, for how California deals with race and racism is critical to its well-being.

It is fashionable today to talk about race and ethnicity in terms of a "color-blind society." We are told that preferences are bad, that only equal opportunity is important. And we are assured that equality exists. Blacks, Hispanics, Vietnamese, Native Americans all enjoy opportunities for economic and professional success equal to that of any Caucasian. Such was the notion at the heart of arguments in favor of Proposition 209 — the successful 1996 initiative that did away with affirmative-action programs in state hiring practices and college admission policies and made "color-blind society" the political *mantra du jour.*

The problem with this argument is that equal opportunity does not exist in any meaningful way for people of color — especially for blacks. "There is no evidence that it is possible to create a society with real equality of opportunity," says James Sidanius, a professor of political psychology at UCLA. "Our species, like most species, organizes hierarchically ... it's how primate societies function." Some groups within that society have more power than others and use it to suppress the less powerful. In America, the group with the power is — and has been since the *Mayflower* thundered ashore — white. Hispanics in California are growing in numbers and may someday share power. But not yet and not all of it.

Carl Jorgensen, a thoughtful and well-respected professor of sociology at the University of California, Davis, insists that the real issue is economic and political privilege — white America has it; people of color do not. To truly understand this fact, Jorgensen says, white America must confront its own uncomfortable history, and he cites as an example the fact that after World War II, the government granted hundreds of thousands of low-interest housing loans to Californians. Barely 100 went to blacks. "How do you really understand the differences in wealth [between white and black America] until you know that?" Jorgensen asks.

The color-blind society, says Jorgensen, focuses on race as a biological classification, ignoring race as a status classification based on past injustice. That, he insists, ignores reality. "The presumption of 209 is that racism doesn't exist," he says. "And that is false."

A harsher view comes from another UC-Davis sociologist, Mary Jackman who identifies "color-blind society" as a smoke screen to help deflect criticism of a racist society. "As subordinate groups complain about their lot, dominant groups move to deny that there is a racial class system," she says. "'Color-blind society' puts emphasis on individual rights rather than group rights. This ignores the fact that racial discrimination exists from the time a black person is born and impacts every facet of that person's life."

The notion of a "color-blind society" serves only to move the debate away from meaningful discussion about equal opportunity for blacks as a group and focuses instead on opportunity for individual blacks, which may be accommodated without threating white domination. You can accept a token black family in the neighborhood but not a neighborhood full of blacks. Read behind the code, and "color-blind society" — in the context of the real America — means that blacks as individuals may rise; blacks as a group cannot.

The face of California changes every day, and it is breathtaking to watch. The cultural richness found throughout this state is unmatched anywhere in the world. Socially, we are coming to grips with our multicultural nature, as contributing editor Lou Cannon reports in this issue. But economically — where real power and privilege reside — we aren't close. We need to change the dialogue — to use words that reflect the real world. Only one word in the phrase "color blind society" fits that description: blind.

— *A.G. Block*

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Can we all

California has been a multicultural stew since its inception, yet its white-dominated power structure has frequently been hostile to notions of diversity. As the day approaches when no single ethnic group constitutes a majority of the population, we can all learn from children on an elementary playground.

by Al Martinez

I was walking by an elementary school in the San Fernando Valley when I stopped to watch a group of children at play. As I stood staring through the mesh fence that surrounded the schoolyard, it occurred to me how lovely their world must be. No rage fueled their competitive spirits, no jealousies fired their energies. Gender wasn't a question in their games, nor were race or cultural history. A clean wind blew through their lives as they ran from and toward each other, and at the end of their play they fell in a heap of unrestricted laughter, their happiness isolated for a moment in a world fenced off from hatred.

Then they went home.

What they faced at home, what they heard there, what was infused into their souls there, were elements of the internal structure that will make them what they will be once memories of the schoolyard fade and the world beyond the fence becomes the world they will occupy for the remainder of their lives. Will the joyful entanglements of their play emerge later as an easy respect for one another, or will forces yet to be applied alter their perceptions and cause a retreat from the closeness they knew at play?

The children I watched that day represented all the major races and cultures intermixing in California as we move toward a new millenium: blacks, whites, Asians and Hispanics, a microcosm of what the future holds in a state that has not always welcomed diversity with parades and banners. Hatreds rooted in economics and cultural beliefs have tarnished the gleam in the Golden State since, and prior to, its inception.

The Chinese, at first welcomed in the 1840s because of their energy and their

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Al Martinez is an award-winning columnist for the Los Angeles Times *and the author of several books.*

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get along?

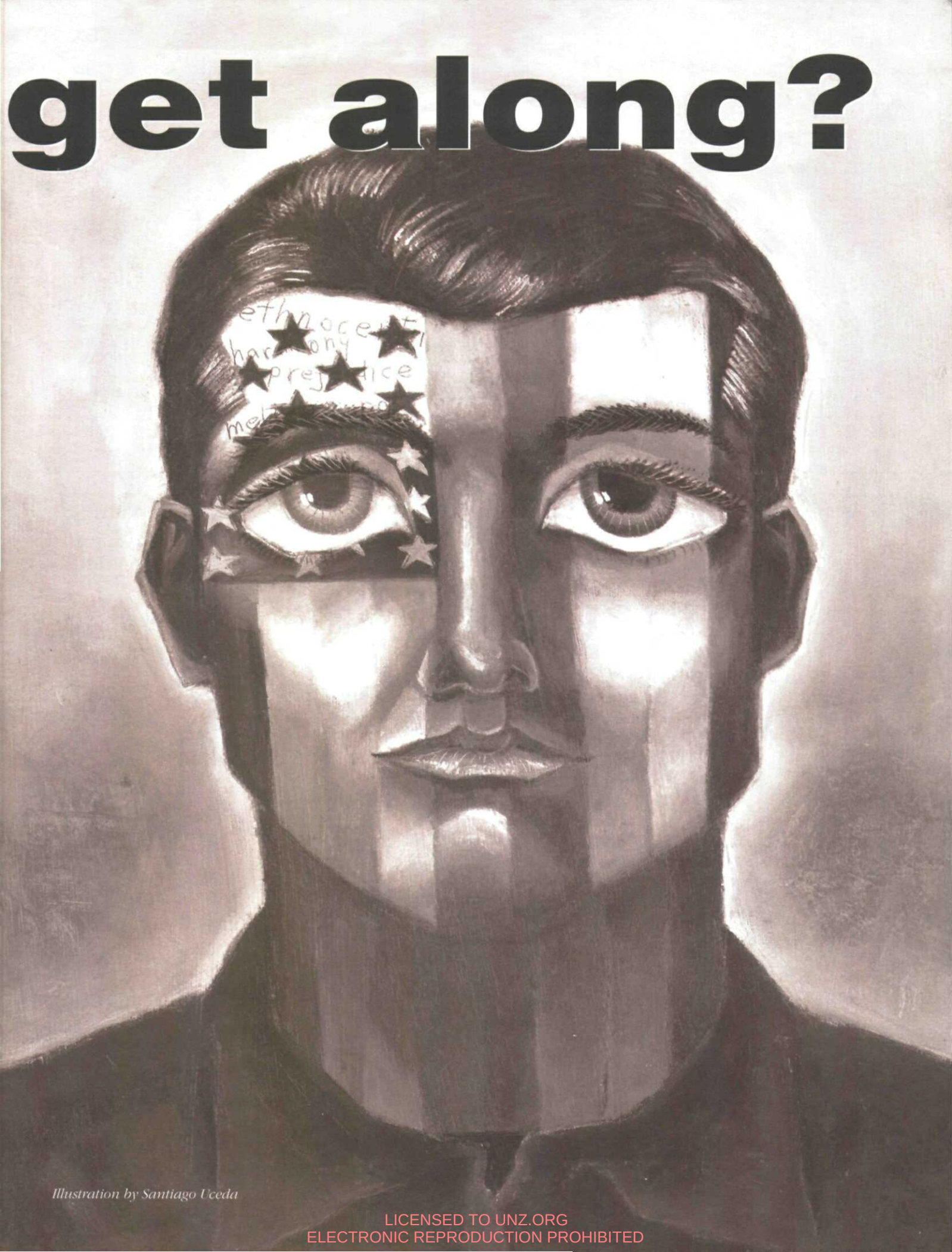

Illustration by Santiago Uceda

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willingness to work for low pay in the gold mines and on the railroads, became the objects of hate-engendered legislation for those very traits. As their numbers grew and their ambitions thrived, the state responded with an ugliness difficult to forgive. The Chinese were taxed by race, barred from testifying in court against whites, excluded from certain jobs and prohibited from marrying Caucasians. They were beaten, robbed and murdered, their bodies left to rot in the cultural debris of our past.

A similar fate awaited the influx of Latinos at the turn of the century. Welcomed at first as cheap farm labor, they were deported by the thousands during the Great Depression, welcomed back in the state's brief Bracero program then ousted again by INS agents responding to "Operation Wetback" and, later, to the termination of the Bracero program. Then in 1994, Proposition 187, supposedly aimed at illegal immigrants, created a new burst of xenophobia directed toward not the Danes or the British but those from south of the border whose millions still hunger for a better life beyond the Golden Door.

Two years later, Proposition 209 took aim at affirmative action and further widened the gap.

History reveals that laws, however crudely applied, can never stem the flow of immigrants yearning for betterment. A human instinct to improve has populated the world and will someday populate the stars. California is the proof of immigration's mighty force. Despite measures to keep foreigners out, a quarter of California's population, eight million, are foreign born, mostly from Latin America (51 percent) and Asia (33 percent). More than 80 languages are spoken in the state. By the year 2010, according to one estimate, the white population will be California's new minority.

One issue therefore becomes clear: We'd better take a lesson from those kids in the schoolyard and start getting along. Diversity is the word upon which our future spins. Diversity of culture, diversity of color, diversity of language, diversity of religions and diversity of dreams. Existing in a single political climate, elements of the differences between us can either lead to wars bloodier than any we've ever seen or to a rainbowed paradise more glorious than any we've ever imagined.

In multi-culturalism exist the seeds of both. Former Governor Jerry Brown, now an Oakland radio talk show host and candidate for mayor, senses danger in the emerging identity of minority groups if they don't expand beyond their clusters. He sees the clustering as a reaction to the state and the nation's racist history.

Destination California

Since the 1500s, when Spain first set its flag on California soil and Europe's royal mapmakers depicted this mysterious new destination point as an island, California's lure as a singular attraction for foreigners and immigrants has held steady. Here, at a glance, is a timeline pulling together the threads that weave this tapestry of diversity that is California today.

pre-1500s — ***Native Americans*** reside in California, still an uncharted frontier to foreign outsiders.

late 1500s — **Spanish explorers** venture north from Mexico, declaring California under Spain's rule.

1769 — **Russian pioneers** head south from Alaska; Spain steps up colonization.

1822 — **Mexicans** declare California their own after winning independence from Spain.

1840 — **British and Yankees** move to California via its ports, lured by trade opportunities

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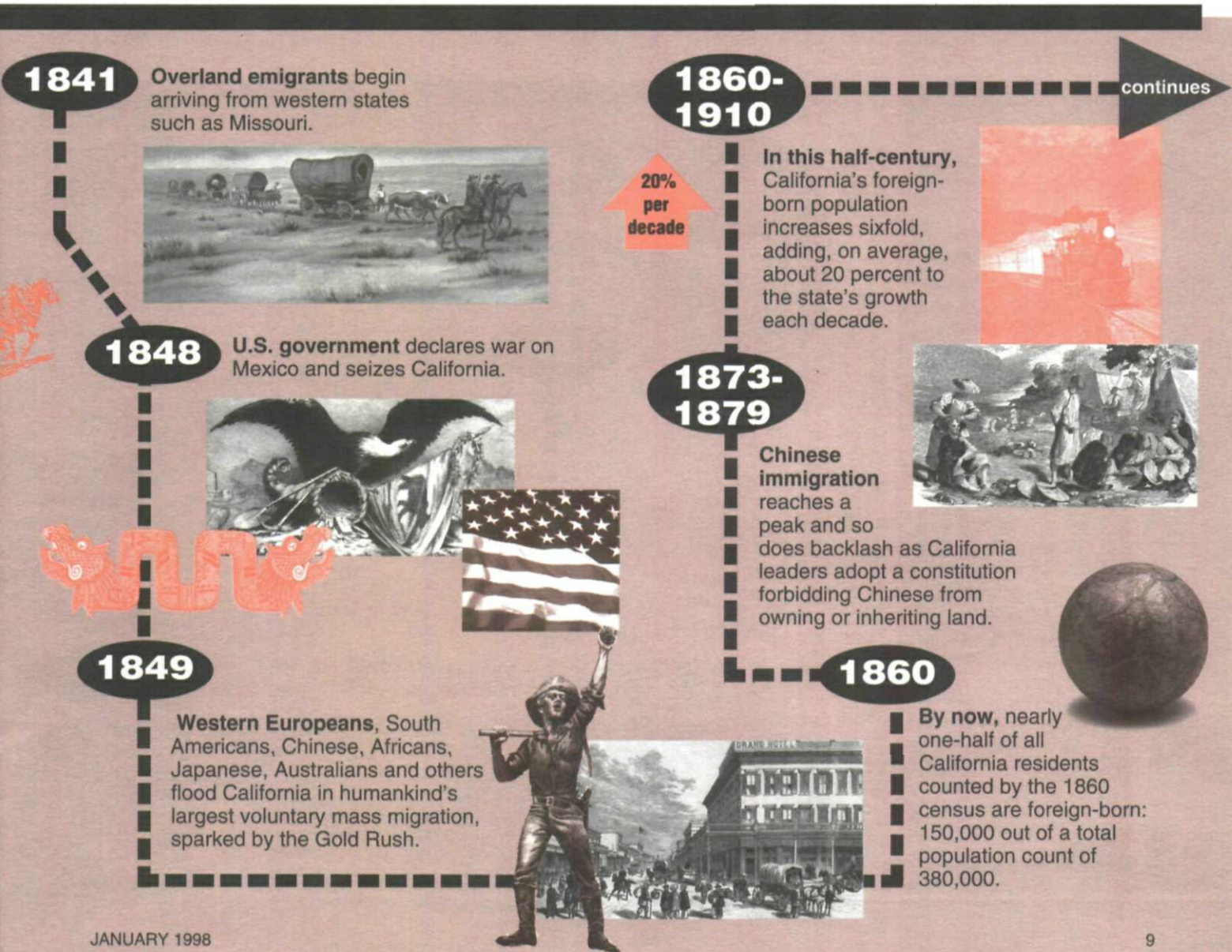
"What we have," he said to me, "is an identity perspective, a crisis. Each minority group feels it has to represent itself for protection against the outside world. It becomes a bundle of attitudes within itself, as opposed to citizens concerned with the total good. They are people looking at the world from the point of view of their own ethnic identity."

Brown sees a revival of civic life as a way of assuring that diversity will create the kind of California most of us want. "That's why I've come to Oakland," he said. "We're equally balanced among whites, blacks, Asians and Hispanics, and we're talking to each other. Oakland is an early-warning portrait of California. There's no reason why it shouldn't succeed as a multi-cultural state. It will have to. If not, Bosnia."

Brown's point is well taken. A people suppressed is a people enraged, because hatred hurts and not forever will the oppressed tolerate its pain. In my house growing up in East Oakland lived a stepfather of German descent whose very soul seethed with a multitude of antipathies. He entered my life before I ever set foot in a school, and I learned from him how terrible hatred can be. He spewed it on blacks, Jews, Asians and Latinos, saving a special vitriol for me. I was a "spic" in his eyes, and he used physical force to establish his dominance over me. When, as he lay dying, I asked why he had hated me so, he only shook his head. There is no logical explanation for racial or ethnic hatred, no justification for its existence. We are molded by our progenitors, even those who assume the role by marriage and not blood, despite early realizations of how wrong that can be. I used the word "nigger" once in a rage when, during teenage, I found myself becoming my stepfather's son. The moment burns in memory with the heat of magnesium and no amount of later apologies, or subsequent years of fighting racism, will ever damp its fire. There is no atonement for the pain deliberately caused others. I never forgave my stepfather. Why should a young black boy at whom my ugly epithet was thoughtlessly hurled ever forgive me?

Lessons abound from personal experiences. To know how much hatred hurts is, in a perfect world, to later empathize with those who hurt. Only in recent history has awareness of cruelty and social upheaval caused us to re-evaluate our attitudes. The Jewish holocaust of World War II took us to the very brink of the abyss of horror from which we emerged stunned by what we had seen and heard and wondering how it could have happened and if it could happen again.

America's great social crusades of the 1960s, much of them centered in California, proved that racial and gender


1841
Overland emigrants begin arriving from western states such as Missouri.
1848
U.S. government declares war on Mexico and seizes California.
1849
Western Europeans, South Americans, Chinese, Africans, Japanese, Australians and others flood California in humankind's largest voluntary mass migration, sparked by the Gold Rush.
1860-1910
continues
20% per decade
In this half-century, California's foreign-born population increases sixfold, adding, on average, about 20 percent to the state's growth each decade.
1873-1879
Chinese immigration reaches a peak and so does backlash as California leaders adopt a constitution forbidding Chinese from owning or inheriting land.
1860
By now, nearly one-half of all California residents counted by the 1860 census are foreign-born: 150,000 out of a total population count of 380,000.

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equality were no longer simply catchphrases. They had emerged as battle cries that belonged to those who stormed the barricades of the past to raise the flags of the future. Subsequent racial riots punctuated a black demand for cultural equality, women marched and sued to establish their place in the context of the American dream, and gay liberation became a new and powerful cry among a minority that finally emerged from the closet and found a voice of its own.

These are today's diverse, what the writer Ambrose Bierce once called "the great unusual." He lived in a different time when diversity did seem unusual, when racial levels dominated our social and political structures, before Jackie Robinson, before the courage of the children at Little Rock, Arkansas, before Martin Luther King Jr., before history caught up with hatred and forever altered the nature of our society. Today we struggle in the transition between now and then, "then" being that year 2010 when two-thirds of California's work force will be today's minorities and three-fourths of our retirees will be Caucasians.

In a speech in Los Angeles, state Senator John Vasconcellos (D-San Jose), citing those figures, emphasized a significant truth, that it's in the best interest of our future old age to provide a skilled work force to sustain "the great economic engine we call California." Without it, without offering education, health benefits and jobs to everyone, the engine will falter. "We Californians have the opportunity, the necessity, the responsibility to realize our great challenge," he said, "...the promise of a multicultural democracy in the global economy..."

A U.S. Census Bureau study points out that today, as in our past, the new immigrants to America demonstrate the same willingness to work as did their forebearers. Once it was building railroads and working the mines until those immigrants established footholds in an often hostile environment. Today, for the time being, it's cleaning tables and pulling weeds for minimum pay until the same energy that powered our ancestors elevates their social heirs into better jobs.

Meanwhile, the Census Bureau points out, unemployment among our current immigrants is just under 5 percent nationally, compared to about 4 percent among the native-born population. The difference is minimal. The same quest that fires our spirit fires theirs. Work, not the public dole, is the ladder that will get them to where they want to be.

Despite what occasionally seems to be a declaration of war on the state's immigrants, Californians are generally cautiously optimistic about the future ... if you're white and make over $60,000 a year. A *Los Angeles Times* poll taken in October revealed that 46 percent of those asked believe that we're headed in the right direction. Forty percent thought otherwise. Not a ringing declaration of faith in the future exactly, but considering that just five years ago only 12 percent expressed an optimistic view and 82 percent felt we

1913

Governor Hiram Johnson signs law that effectively forbids any Japanese immigrant from owning land or leasing it for more than three years. The law was declared unconstitutional in the 1950s.

1910-1970

As the nation's immigrant population grows at an average rate of 5 percent per decade, California's foreign-born population continues to expands at an average rate of 20 percent per decade.

20% per decade growth continues

1942-1950

World War II defense industry boom attracts a surge in migration from other states, especially among African Americans, whose percentage of the state's population more than doubles.

1965

The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act opens up a new era of Asian immigration by abolishing the national origin quotas in effect since the 1920s.

1964

Flow from Mexico changes from legal and seasonal to predominantly illegal and permanent due to Congress' termination of the Bracero program, which hosted up to 400,000 guest farmworkers a year.

1963

Lured by climate and growth, migration to California from other states runs nearly 1,000 people per day. Immigration accounts for nearly two-thirds of the states's annual population growth, which peaks at 600,000.

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were sliding downhill toward hell, it was a vast improvement.

What bothers those who calculate California's future, however, is that the state's minority population still isn't sure we're going in the right direction and therein may lie the ultimate answer to our destiny. Breaking the *Times* poll down, only 28 percent of the blacks and 38 percent of the Latinos questioned felt optimistic about the state's future. Similarly, analyzing it along economic lines, the majority of those who expressed optimism (58 percent) earned over $60,000 a year, compared to only 33 percent of those making under $20,000 a year. People living on the edge find it difficult hearing the drums for tomorrow, and the edge is occupied mostly by blacks and Hispanics.

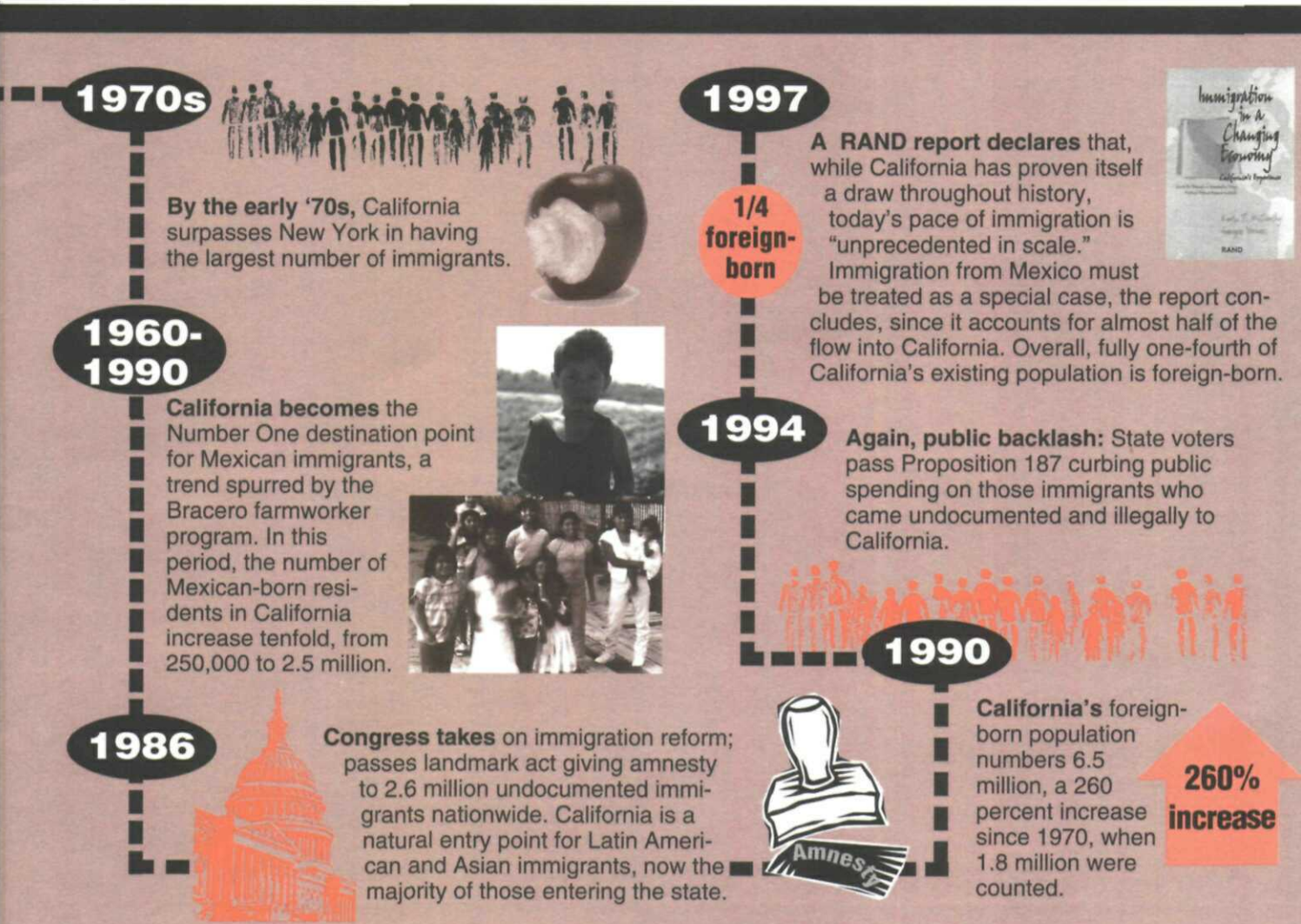
Where are we now?

Vasconcellos speculates that, "We could be at a place where diversity leads to strength. There's a lot of healthy prospects," he added, "if we're not blinded by old prejudices."

I heard this repeated many times over recently at a ceremony of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. Those who stood to receive annual awards for somehow bettering the human condition almost unanimously foresaw a future for California much brighter than they might have envisioned only a few years ago. They saw the state's millions reaching the top of a mountain built of old hatreds and, having achieved that most difficult of all climbs, moving on to other peaks, each of which would represent not simply a rejection of the past but an improvement for the future.

The question that awaits to be answered — "Can't we all just get along?" — was asked by police-beating victim Rodney King at the height of the 1992 riots in South-Central Los Angeles, the worst social uprising in U.S. history. The riots, in fact, began after a jury in Simi Valley acquitted four Los Angeles policemen in the videotaped beating that showed King, who is black, on the ground being pummeled by the white cops. It was later, pressed to comment on the riots, that King, an unlikely philosopher, asked the one question that remains a central factor in looking toward California's future: Can we get along? I think we can because I think we must. There is growing evidence that the surge of history is on the side of those who march together away from an often violent and dismal past. There is hope.

The gloomy German philosopher Oswald Spengler, who wrote "Decline of the West," encapsulated cultural diversity when he observed, "In the destinies of the several cultures that follow upon one another, grow up with one another, touch, overshadow, and suppress one another, is compressed the whole content of human history." What he didn't mention was the possibilty of a diverse culture existing beyond suppression, but still touching and still growing. That could be an element of human progress yet to be written as California edges hesitantly into a new millennium and a new epic of social realization.


1970s
By the early '70s, California surpasses New York in having the largest number of immigrants.
1960-1990
California becomes the Number One destination point for Mexican immigrants, a trend spurred by the Bracero farmworker program. In this period, the number of Mexican-born residents in California increase tenfold, from 250,000 to 2.5 million.
1986
Congress takes on immigration reform; passes landmark act giving amnesty to 2.6 million undocumented immigrants nationwide. California is a natural entry point for Latin American and Asian immigrants, now the majority of those entering the state.
Amnesty
1990
California's foreign-born population numbers 6.5 million, a 260 percent increase since 1970, when 1.8 million were counted.
260% increase
1994
Again, public backlash: State voters pass Proposition 187 curbing public spending on those immigrants who came undocumented and illegally to California.
1997
1/4 foreign-born
A RAND report declares that, while California has proven itself a draw throughout history, today's pace of immigration is "unprecedented in scale." Immigration from Mexico must be treated as a special case, the report concludes, since it accounts for almost half of the flow into California. Overall, fully one-fourth of California's existing population is foreign-born.
Immigration in a Changing Economy
RAND

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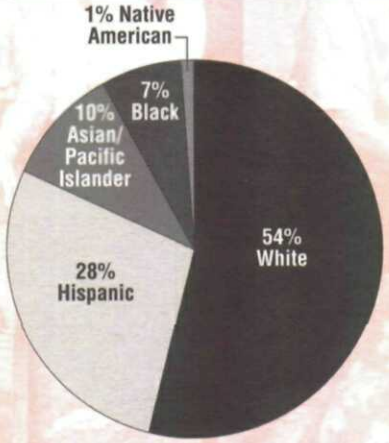
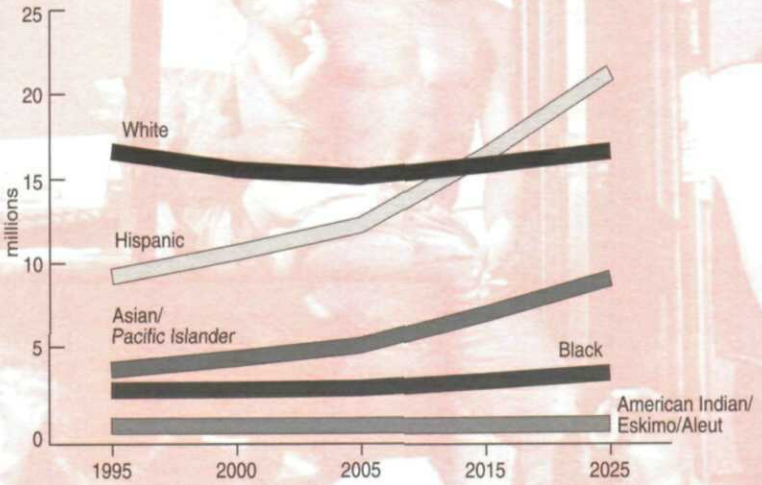
Race by the

Population

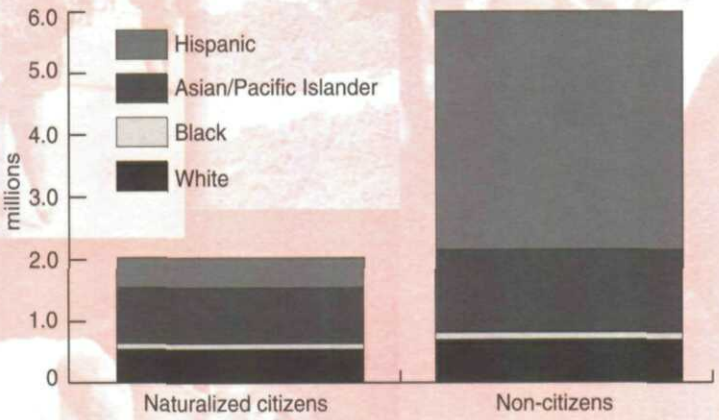
Population by race/ethnicity
Total Population (July, 1995) 32,063,000



Population Growth projections



Immigrant Population



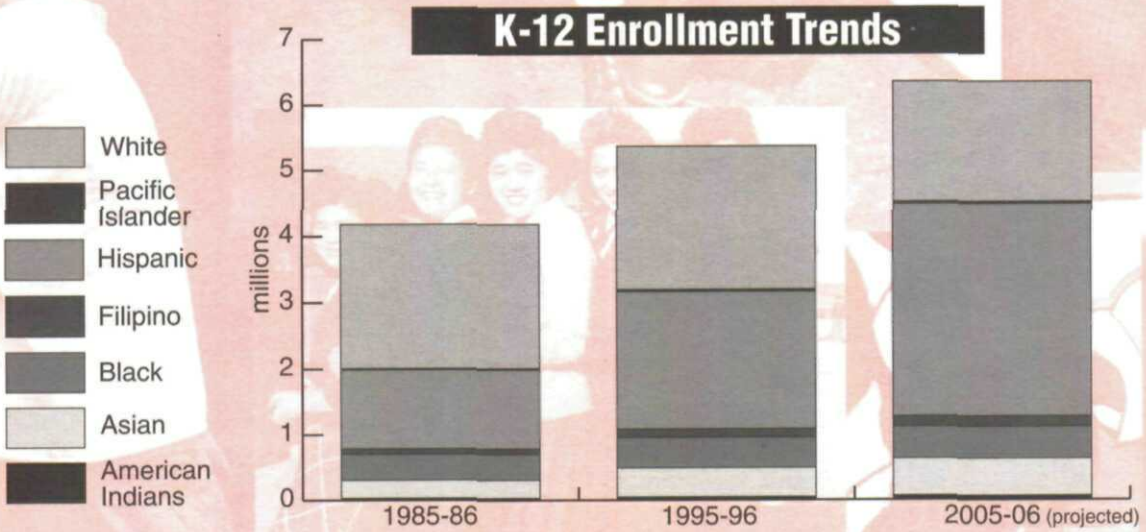
Where Californians were Born*

Native born	24,063	Canada	110
Mexico	3,421	Germany	85
Philippines	647	Cuba	27
El Salvador	399	Jamaica	4
Vietnam	348	Other Asia	912
China	298	Other Europe	540
Korea	262	Other Central American	361
India	169	Other Caribbean	21
South America	164	Elsewhere	171
Great Britain	117		

*in thousands

Education

K-12 Enrollment Trends



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Demographic Research Unit, State Department of Finance; State Department of Education.

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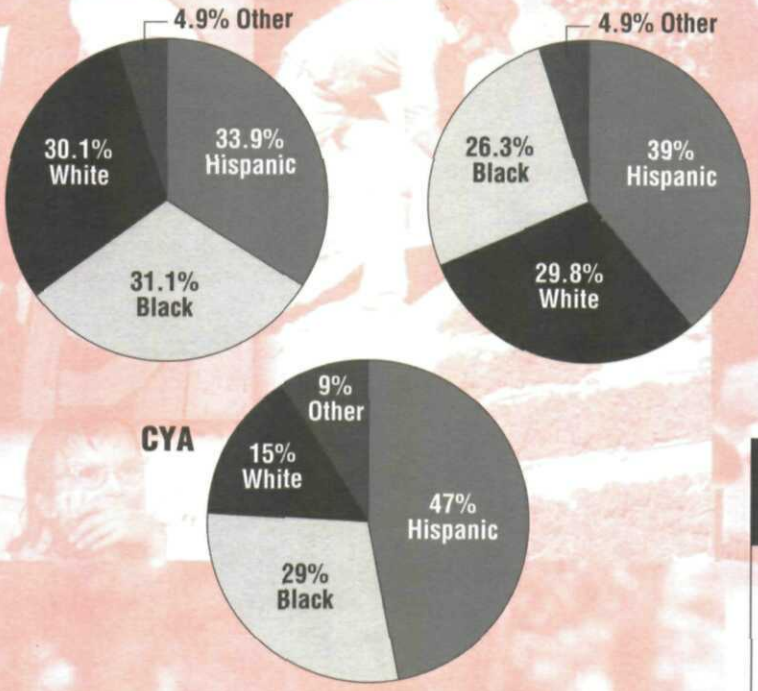
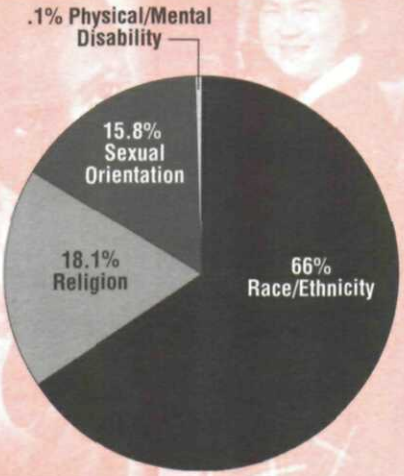
Numbers

Crime

Corrections Population



Hate Crimes



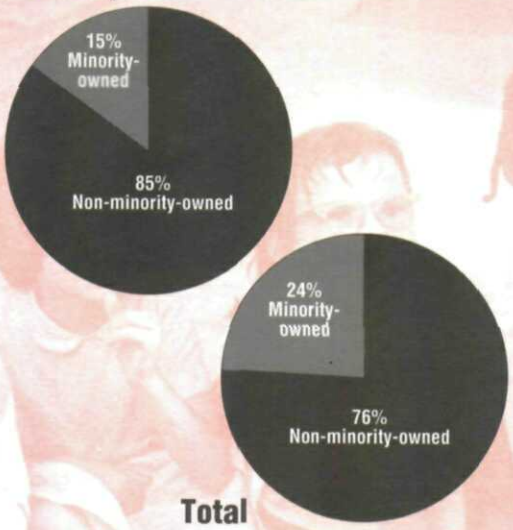
Breakdown of racially motivated hate crimes

Anti-black	846
Anti-white	236
Anti-Hispanic	201
Anti-Asian/Pacific Islander	197
Anti-American Indian	1
Anti-other race/ethnic group	82
Anti-multi-racial group	169

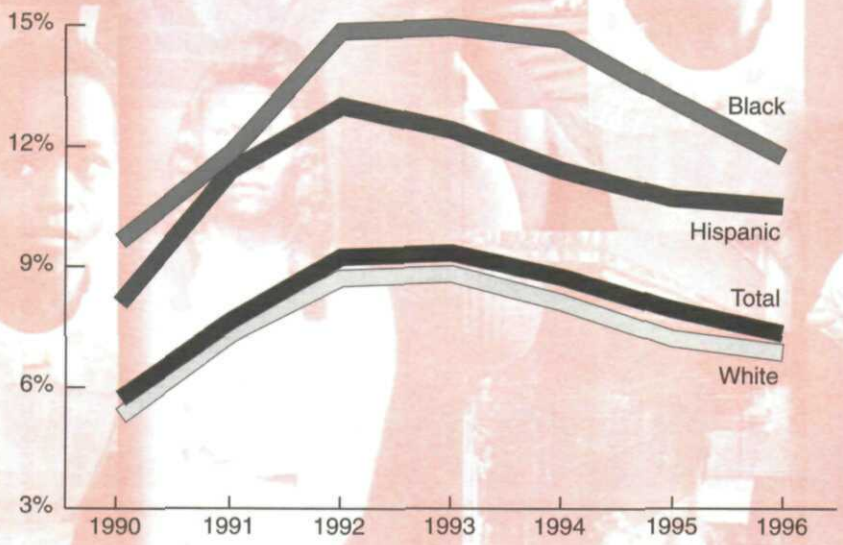
Economics

Minority-owned businesses

Gross Receipts



Unemployment in the 1990s



Sources: Department of Corrections; California Youth Authority; Attorney General's 1995 Hate Crimes Report; 1992 Economic Census, U.S. Census Bureau; Employment Development Department.

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The nature

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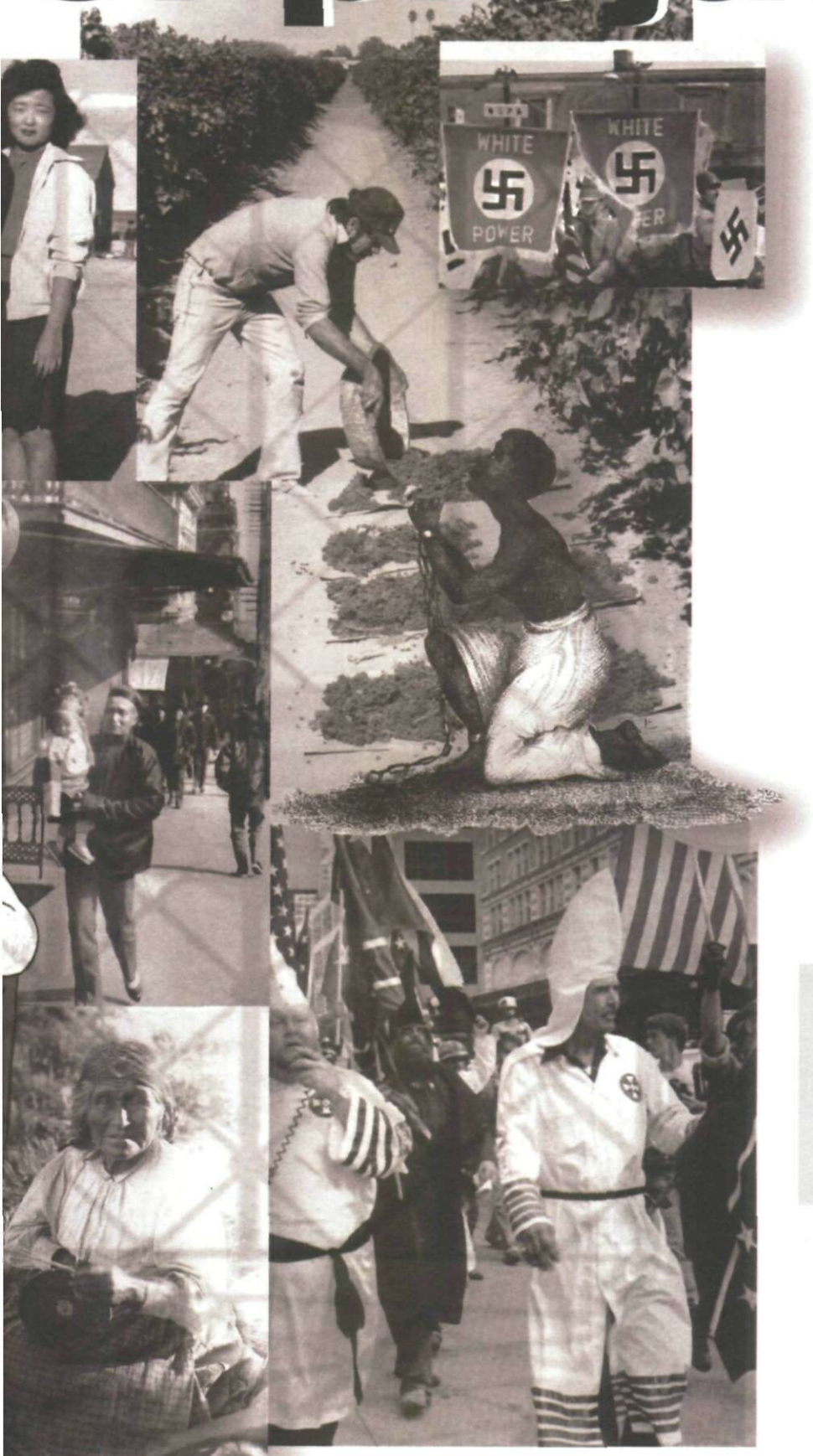
# of prejudice



For a society made up of many diverse and competing cultures, understanding bias, bigotry and racism may be the key to survival.

by A.G. Block

It is universal. Every segment of every society has it. In the entire history of mankind, every culture, every nation and hamlet has been rife with some form of prejudice against something or someone.

Simply put, prejudice is a negative feeling about someone because that person belongs to a particular group. It is an attitude, often fueled by false ideas and based on stereotypes, and it reveals itself in many ways — bigotry, racism, homophobia, anti-semitism, gender bias, generational tensions, a formal caste system, discrimination in housing and jobs. It shows up in institutions; for instance, the way teachers are assigned to barrio schools (see story, page 32) or the number of rail stations allocated to a ghetto. It is as common

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as clothing and as impossible to shed as skin.

"In order to act without bias," says Carl Jorgensen, associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Davis, "you have to have a completely accurate perception of the world — and there is no such thing."

It is a simple exercise to define "prejudice." It is not simple to understand how and why it develops, for there is little consensus among social scientists who study the subject. Yet this understanding — especially as it applies to race relations — may be critical to the survival of a state as complex and varied as California, where diverse cultures mingle and clash and compete for finite amounts of power and resources, and where ethnic groups themselves are divided between long-established communities and legions of newly arrived immigrants.

Race relations in California are complex because of the state's enormous ethnic diversity. "Our perceptions about race are locked into the black-white paradigm," says Gary Delgado, a community organizer and founder of Applied Research Center, a social research center in Oakland. "But that isn't the picture we see on the street. Recently arrived Asians, like those from Southeast Asia and Pacific Islanders, have a poverty rate three times that of more established Asian communities. Thus, there is conflict and problems among [various] racial groups ... as well as with the white community."

Basically, there are two schools of thought on the how and why of prejudice. Adherents of one theory — articulated by Gordon Allport in his 1954 book, "The Nature of Prejudice" — believe that individuals learn prejudice through cultural contacts. The second theory, described in a 1958 article by social scientist Hubert Blumer, argues that prejudice is developed by dominant social groups as a way to justify and protect their privileges and positions.

According to the first theory, prejudice develops through cultural learning. "Race antipathy is not instinctive but a matter of careful education," prominent social theorist and black activist W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in the NAACP's *The Crisis* magazine in 1914. "Black and white children play together gladly and know no prejudice until it is implanted precept upon precept and by strong social pressure; and when it is so implanted it is just as strong in cases where there is no physical difference as it is where physical differences are striking. The racial repulsion in the Balkans among peoples of practically the same blood is today greater than it was between whites and blacks on Virginia plantations."

A new cu

Fueled by immigration and eased by intermarriage, a new, mixed culture is emerging in Southern California that provides a peek at the future face of California — and the nation.

by Lou Cannon

Illustrations by Norm Hines

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Prejudice evolves throughout a person's formative years, says David Sears, a professor of psychology and political science at UCLA and an advocate for the theory of cultural learning. "We're born clean as far as [attitudes toward] any specific group is concerned," he says, adding, however, that some scholars believe we are born ready to develop preferences.

Through cultural learning, individuals develop the stereotypes that foster prejudice. "It comes in many ways," says Sears. "Things heard from family and friends, and in the media about groups. It comes from informal schoolyard conversations. Kids talk about things. Every kid tries to find out the right way to talk and think about things in accordance with their peers, and many attitudes about social groups get transmitted this way. A person then pools this information and evaluates the messages received from all these sources."

Cultural learning tends to regard prejudice as a "giant misunderstanding that can be fixed," according to Mary Jackman, a professor of sociology at UC-Davis who disagrees with the theory. As a result, she says, it is thought that prejudice eventually can be diminished by contact between groups because contact destroys the stereotypes that lay behind the prejudices. "[Allport] thought it was a parochial thing left over from less liberated times," she says, "and that as people become more educated, they become more tolerant, and it becomes easier to correct the misunderstandings."

But for Jackman and others, prejudicial attitudes such as bigotry and racism are not a matter of individual learning alone but are fostered by a society's dominant group and designed to perpetuate its position.

"Human beings have a propensity to create hierarchially structured societies, with one or two groups at the top of the system and the rest at the bottom," says James Sidanius, professor of political psychology at UCLA. In the United States, that dominant group has been white since the days of the Jamestown settlement. "The policies of the dominant groups are shaped by the desire to maintain that dominance."

One of those policies is discrimination against subservient groups, motivated by the dominant group's need to protect and justify its status. Dominant groups feel a proprietary claim to privilege and position — a claim secured through control of political power and resources, according to Ronald Niezen, associate professor of anthropology at Harvard. Prejudice, he says, "gains momentum when there

ture

Without fanfare, metropolitan Los Angeles has become a world culture where multiracial diversity in the workplace and social situations is taken for granted and ethnic intermarriage is commonplace.

The Los Angeles experiment does not meet with universal approval from observers or participants. The city's polyglot nature, where signs and billboards in many neighborhoods are in Spanish or in an Asian language, unsettles longtime residents who remember and prefer a more homogenous city. Recent immigrants, particularly if they are unskilled or do not speak English, are sometimes disparaged. The 1992 riots left scars that have not healed, especially among Koreans, who were hardest hit economically and psychologically.

But immigrants from the Pacific Rim are transforming Los Angeles. Latino entrepreneurs from Mexico and Central America have revitalized stretches of South Central Los Angeles, accomplishing with hard work the economic resurgence that government and corporate America promised but failed to deliver after the riots. These immigrants pool incomes to buy houses, raise their families and pursue a traditional American dream. While it is often said that two-thirds of the children in Los Angeles schools speak a foreign language at home (see story, page 32), it is rarely mentioned that most of them, despite the many problems of the Los Angeles schools, learn fluent English.

Social analyst Gregory Rodriguez has observed that 800 hate crimes and 5,000 ethnic intermarriages occur each year in Los Angeles County, with the crimes receiving much more attention than the marriages. "But we can't understand what's happening in racial relations by focusing on misery indexes," Rodriguez says. "More important than the criminal acts of the marginal few is the profound change occurring in cultural and ethnic relationships in Southern California."

Sociologists consider intermarriage data significant, since each marriage reflects thousands of more casual relationships. But the data is skimpy because the issue remains touchy and relatively unexplored. No one knows how many Americans consider themselves to be of mixed race. In the next census, Americans for the first time will be allowed to use multiple racial categories to classify themselves. The option will allow Americans of mixed race to demonstrate respect for their diverse heritage. Rodriguez suspects that in Southern California, the new census designations also will show that interethnic relationships "are woven together in complex ways to an extent we cannot imagine."

Indeed, Los Angeles is a cultural salad bowl in which thousands of daily interactions occur among Latinos, non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, Asians, and persons of mixed race. As such, it offers America a peek into its future. In Los Angeles County, Latinos are a plurality, and no group is a majority. Demographers say that this pluralism, if not necessarily the precise ethnic balance of Los Angeles, will be the face of California in the next generation and eventually the face of the United States.

Political historian Michael Barone has written that Los Angeles County is "to the America of the 1990s what New York City was to the America of the 1910s, the great entry

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is competition over resources."

Although Jackman subscribes to the theory of dominant groups, she sees prejudice as too narrow a concept. For her, the real issue is "equality of opportunity," with prejudice merely one of the tools used to maintain the status quo."The dominant group sets up social institutions to expropriate resources from the subordinate group," she says, citing black-white relations as an example. "Whites imported cheap labor, blacks as slaves, and have sought to maintain the nature of that relationship even after slavery ended. There was sharecropping and factory and household labor — all demeaning of black status to elevate white status."

Prejudicial attitudes allow the dominant group to justify its status by using stereotypes to argue that subservient groups do not deserve equality. "The major engine of prejudice is justifying privilege," says UC-Davis' Jorgensen. "Whenever one group dominates society, [it develops] an ideology that justifies [it]. How else could Christian ministers bless slave ships? When one group dominates another, it can't just say, 'We won and so we're going to take everything.' It has to say, 'We won because you are something less than us — and we're going to take everything.'"

Under this argument, prejudice is not merely confined to the uneducated and ignorant, as Du Bois pointed out more than 70 years ago. "It is silly to talk of race prejudice as simply a child of ignorance and poverty," he wrote in *The Crisis* in August 1923. "...the real deep and the basic race hatred in the United States is a matter of the educated and distinguished leaders of white civilization. They are the ones who are determined to keep black folk from developing talent and sharing in civilization. The only thing to their credit is that they are ashamed of what they do and say and cover their tracks desperately even if ineffectually with excuses and surprises and alibis. But the discrimination goes on and they not only do not raise a hand to stop it — they even gently and politely but in strict secrecy put their shoulders to the wheel and push it forward."

On the street, in real life, prejudice appears in a million guises.

"It can be as minimal as avoidance," says Harvey Schechter, who spent 41 years with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, retiring as western states director. "You may say 'good morning' to a neighbor, but that's it. And your kids can't play with that family's kids."

Racism and bigotry show up in the way a person acts toward others based on stereotypes he or she has developed

point for immigrants and the venue of their upward mobility." In the early decades of the 20th century, European immigrants came to New York in the hope of exchanging the poverty and oppression of the old world for the opportunity and freedom of the new. Modern immigrants with similar motivations arrive daily in Los Angeles from Armenia, Russia, Iran, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and a variety of Latin American and Asian nations. Los Angeles has more people who call themselves Mexican than any city except Mexico City, and more Koreans than any city except Seoul.

It is not surprising that the new immigrants — like the Irish, Italians and Eastern Europeans who came before them — are seen as threatening the homogenity and harmony of America. As recently as the 1950s, Los Angeles was the most white and Protestant of the nation's big cities. Today, there is diversity in the work place in most of Southern California, and the de facto housing segregation that prevented African Americans and other minorities from living in many Southern California communities long after such discrimination became illegal, has broken down. Between 1980 and 1990, African Americans became a significant population factor in some 70 census tracts in Southern California where they had not lived before. Latinos now live in every zip code in the region.

As for the new immigrants, various studies have shown that they treasure American freedoms and practice the "family values" so often celebrated by conservatives. Violent crime has declined and community volunteerism and church attendance have risen during this period of Southern California's greatest immigration. Immigrant entrepreneurs and workers have played a key role in the economic recovery, following the deep recession triggered by the end of the Cold War and the decline of the aerospace industry. As Barone puts it, the new immigrant entrepreneur is the person "who starts a small business in a garage, hires people newly arrived into town, sells products out of a van, and makes enough money to expand his business and buy a home." These businesses are important in Los Angeles County, where 94 percent of firms employ less than 50 people. Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles County Development Corporation, has observed that Latino population, business activity and purchasing power increased even during the "gut-wrenching economic downturn, when the media was focusing on the flight of business and the white middle class from Southern California."

It is true, of course, that these immigrants do not always get along with one another — in Los Angeles, or elsewhere. Sergio Bendixen's useful polls have shown that many Latinos fear African Americans, who for their part feel pressure from Latino and Asian immigrants in the competition for jobs and living space in South Central and even more so in crowded Pico-Union west of downtown, where the density of 25,000 people per square mile is three times that of the city as a whole. Racial and ethnic conflicts in these areas were exacerbated during the recession and especially the 1992 riots. The riots caused collapse of the Black-Korean Alliance, which had played a calming role in South Central.

But this alliance is being rebuilt in broader form by one of its founders, veteran community activist Joe Hicks, who heads the Multi-Cultural Collaborative. The name reflects the reality of a city where the population of Latinos and Asians is growing steadily while the black population disperses and the Anglo population declines.

Los Angeles County, where 44 percent of the 10 million people are Latino, is a multicultural tapestry with a Latin design. The Spanish-language television station Univision has a larger audience for news broadcasts than any English-language station. KSNE, an Ontario radio station, broadcasts 24 hours a day in Spanish and in a format that mixes *ranchera* music with advice to immigrants. The works of Mexican muralists David Siquerios and Rodolfo Morales are featured in Southern California museums. "Anne Frank in the World,"

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about members of other groups. These stereotypes — and the racism that flows from them — can be categorical: All members of a targeted group are bad, period, no exceptions. Or, they can be what some scholars call "probabilistic," when a person judges an individual based on the probability of certain kinds of behavior but leaves room for the accomplished individual. For instance, a categorical bigot would despise both mobster Bugsy Siegel and baseball star Sandy Koufax because both are Jewish. A probabilistic bigot would regard most black males suspiciously, even fearfully, because he or she has a certain image of black males as violence-prone. But he or she won't feel the same suspicion or fear toward Michael Jordan.

This kind of bigotry is not confined to whites on the street or shopkeepers in South Central Los Angeles. No less a champion of young black males than the Reverend Jesse Jackson made what he called a humiliating admission several years ago in *U.S. News & World Report*. "There is nothing more painful for me at this stage in my life," Jackson told the magazine, "than to walk down the street and hear footsteps and to start to think about robbery and then look around and see it's somebody white and feel relieved."

UCLA's Sidanius says probabilistic stereotyping can result in "irrational bigotry" when it distorts the facts. For example, he says, "only 5 percent of young black males fit the stereotype [of a violence-prone street thug], so an individual is making the wrong judgment 95 percent of the time." For Jackman, the difference is irrelevant; both forms of stereotyping result in discrimination.

Still, coming to grips with the prejudices inherent in black-white relations may be a key to understanding how society functions. In California, blacks are on the verge of being marginalized politically, economically and socially because, as a percentage of the population, their numbers are dwindling (see chart, page 12). At the same time, as much as social scientists may disagree on the how and why of prejudice, there is unanimity that blacks are the special target of prejudice in America. Discrimination and racism run through all of American history and are visited upon every corner of the country. But the black-white experience is unique and drives race relations, even in California where other ethnic groups form greater challenges to white domination.

"There is more negative prejudice against blacks than against any other group," says UCLA's Sears. "It is stronger and more difficult to change." Blacks, he says, also are the

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a traveling exhibit, tells the story of Jewish life before and during the Holocaust in Spanish as well as in English.

In terms of cultural blending, the happiest analogue for Los Angeles may not be New York but Hawaii, one of the world's most successful interracial cultures. What happens in the faraway islands of Hawaii often seems irrelevant to the mainland, but Hawaii is American, with an Asian beat instead of a Latin one. Half of all marriages in Hawaii are interracial, and more than a third of the people consider themselves *hapa* — the Hawaiian word for "half." The term first was applied to the offspring of marriages between Caucasian missionaries and native Hawaiians. Later, it described children of *haoles*, as non-Hispanic whites are called in Hawaii, and Americans of Japanese ancestry. Now, the term generally applies to people of mixed race.

Susan Yim, a Honolulu writer, believes that the influence of *hapa* has helped make Hawaiians accepting and sensitive. "Hawaii's gift is that we respect each other for what we don't have in common," she says. "We appreciate our differences." Yim, whose mother is Japanese-American and whose father is Chinese-American, is married to a *haole*. "I feel comfortable being *hapa*," she says.

Hawaii's present attitude also is the product of long and mostly successful struggles by non-whites to share power once held by an economic oligarchy that largely was white. Karen Grigsby Bates, a *Los Angeles Times* columnist and African American, believes such struggles also will be crucial to what happens in Southern California. "The key to whether we become a more accepting society is how power is shared," says Bates. "Elites cling to power with tenacity, but some of the whites who object most to power-sharing have left the area or will [leave]."

Bates believes that a new multiculturalism is replacing "the old black-white paradigm ... because that's the only way it can work." Rodriguez thinks Los Angeles already is a *mestizo* culture unlike any other. Joe Hicks, working to improve the lot of poor people in the heart of South Central, expresses guarded optimism about the Los Angeles experiment but thinks it will take work and luck to make it succeed.

"The answer to the Rodney King question — can we all get along? — can't be answered in the abstract," Hicks says. "You have to build alliances. The economic realities of South L.A. have erected barriers among racial and ethnic groups. The future of this city is bound up on its ability to find common ground."

Contributing Editor Lou Cannon is a special correspondent for The Washington Post *and the author of several books. His latest book, "Official Negligence," is due out this year.*

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primary target for prejudice by all ethnic groups, including Hispanics and Asians. "Anti-black prejudice ... is invasive, like a weed. It gets into everything."

The black-white relationship is unique because it is old and because blacks — unlike other white and non-white groups — did not come to America voluntarily. They came in chains in the holds of ships and their native culture and their families were deliberately stripped from them during slavery. "Other groups may be segregated for a while," says Jackman, "but after two or three generations, people get assimilated into the population. This is true for all but blacks. The origins of the black-white relationship lies in slavery and kidnapping. Africans from the beginning have been treated differently."

To overcome racism requires an accurate understanding of how racism works. "We live in a sea of facts that have been distorted by white supremacy," says Carl Jorgensen. "The only way to act without prejudice is to rid ourselves of these distortions."

Can the blight of prejudice ever be stricken from society? Likely not, but most social scientists believe that different cultures can get along (see story page 16). Dominant-group theorists such as James Sidanius believe that racism cannot be "cured" because it is not a misunderstanding but the result of real conflicts of interest. It may be managed but not destroyed, and he points to the example set by Canada where he says different cultures live in relative harmony.

David Sears, on the other hand, is more optimistic, citing polls that show ever-increasing tolerance in racial attitudes among whites and blacks. But to truly eradicate racism, Sears insists, America — especially white America — must admit that racism exists. "The problem for whites is that they just don't admit it," he says. "If society can come around to admitting that [racism] has been a core part of society for the past 400 years, then let's admit it and move on."

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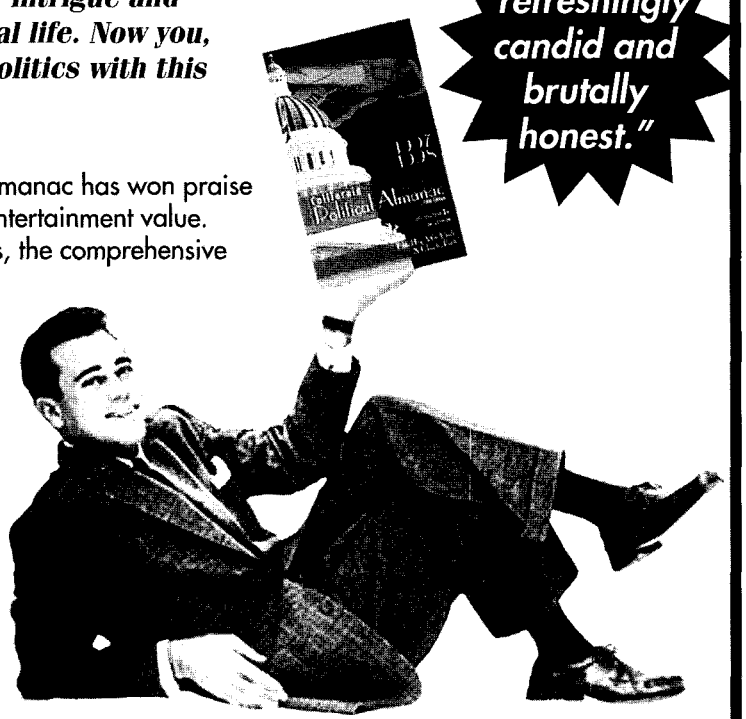

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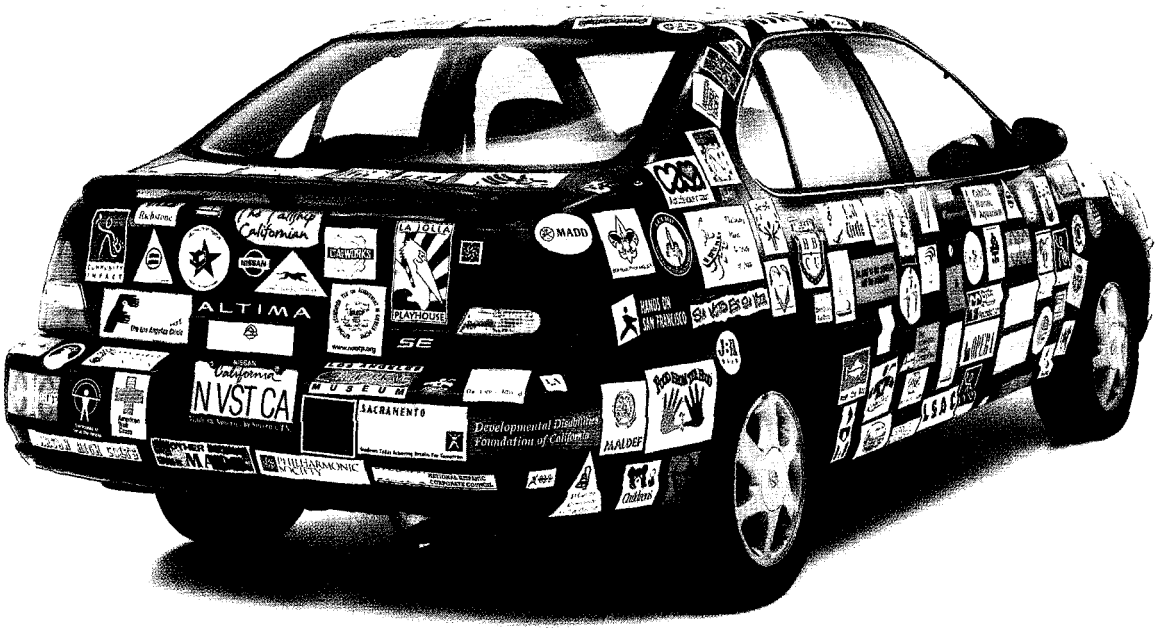

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California has the highest

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een pregnancy rate in the industrialized world. This series asks **why**...and what we should do.

Low-income does not mean low standards or low expectations. While poverty is the most powerful predictor of teen pregnancy, and Latinos are among the poorest in the state, most low-income girls still do not become pregnant.

What makes the difference for these young women? Access to services, education, safety, family and community support—the social capital to invest in their futures.

Let's build on the existing strengths in our Latino communities.

To deal with teen pregnancy, we must build on one of the greatest strengths of Latino communities: the powerful role women have played in building strong families and neighborhoods.

But do Latinas have access to the social capital they need? This means honoring women's abilities and judgement, helping clear away obstacles to their advancement.

In just one example of building social capital, Latino families in Los Angeles have guided the development of low-income housing. This pioneering effort has included on-site childcare, English classes, computer labs, all tools for women making their own goal-oriented plans—family planning in the largest sense.

Which works? To make better choices possible, or to punish people for the choices they've been forced to make?

Our experience has shown us that expecting the best produces the best. Big, one-size-fits-all social programs often don't take into account the experiences of Latino communities. They ignore our strengths, dwell on the deficits, and end up perpetuating the problems.

Beatriz Olvera Stotzer is president of New Economics for Women, a Los Angeles-based economic development corporation that has built low-income housing complexes copied nationwide.

***FACT:** Latina teens have the highest teen birth rate in California.*

Our educational system is a good place to start expecting more. Schools should be one of the main places where young Latinas gain access to the social capital they need. Yet Latinos are dropping out at twice the rate of non-Latinos.

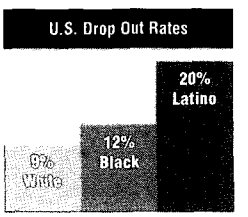
Shouldn't communities and families be able to hold the schools accountable? And wouldn't schools do better if they started treating students as critical consumers of information, hungry to succeed?

The same goes for housing, health care, and employment. Every sector can become a rich source of social capital, enabling girls to decide who they want to be, where they want to go, and how soon they want to parent.

Blame isolates young people. Respect engages the community.

We must expect the best from our young. But we must also ask the best of ourselves and our institutions, to make sure that all our teenagers have the information and opportunity to live up to their great potential.

That's not doing the young any favors. It's simply doing them justice.



***FACT:** Our schools must do a better job helping Latinas graduate and build the skills they need to escape poverty and teen pregnancy.*

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Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative
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Public Media Center Chart: US Education Department, 1995.

Teen pregnancy is an adult problem.

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Reality

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votes

California's political demographics are slowly growing more in synch with its overall demographics. How will this change affect the way elections are run — and won — in 1998 and beyond?

by Steve Scott

The swearing-in of a new city council in the southeast Los Angeles County city of Lynwood is hardly the sort of event likely to attract one of the L.A. media's patented ground and air attacks, especially since there wasn't a celebrity in sight. So it was no surprise when only two television cameras, one from Spanish language network Telemundo, were on hand to record the formal changing of the political guard in the Lynwood City Council chambers. In fact, the real surprise was that there were even two.

If some of those on hand are to be believed, this early December induction ceremony was a window into the political future of California, or at least of its more visible urban centers. For on that day, the city known only three short decades ago as "Lily White Lynwood" got its first Latino council majority and its first Latino mayor. Even more striking than the ethnicity of the new regime was that of the old guard — not "lily whites" who had long since deserted the municipality for more distant suburbs, but African Americans, including the first black ever elected to the Lynwood City Council. Although the campaign had been largely waged over issues of economics and government ethics, the racial significance of the transition was not lost on anyone in the room.

"They put on a good show ... but you don't have to go too far past the superficial statements to find the great problems between the two," said Sergio Bendixen, the Telemundo reporter on hand to document the events.

There is little doubt that California is on the leading edge of a national redefinition of

Illustration by Anthony Strom

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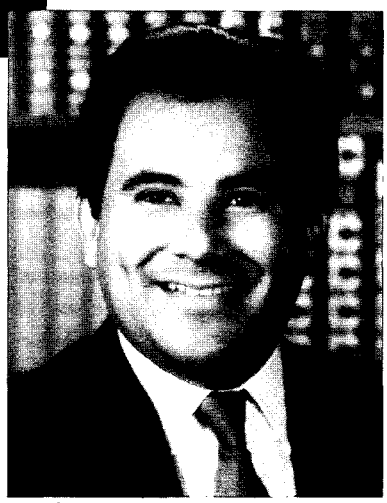
Bustamante

racial diversity, one which acknowledges that race is no longer merely a "black and white issue." It isn't simply the much-discussed population trend which will carry California into "majority minority" status by the early part of the next century (see chart, page 12).



Polanco

These new populations are rapidly and visibly assimilating into mainstream society.

"There is not one census tract in California that does not have a Latino household in it," said Harry Pachon, director of the Tomas Rivera Center at Scripps College in Claremont. "You're not talking about a segregated society. It's an integrated society."

The social and cultural implications of this integration are apparent to anyone strolling through Horton Plaza mall in San Diego or twisting their radio dial in downtown Los Angeles. But this transformation has been far less visible in the ephemeral world of electoral politics. New immigrants are, by definition, non-citizens and thus non-voters. Even those who have attained citizenship have opted out of participating in elections, some because of bad memories about politics in their homelands, others because they were still too consumed with trying to build their lives in the U.S.

No mas.

The past two years have been witness to a new burst of political involvement among groups previously viewed as political afterthoughts. According to exit polls conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* after the 1996 elections, Latinos constituted 10 percent of the state's electorate, as opposed to 7 percent in the 1992 election. Much of this increase was attributable to a surge in new citizen registrants, who voted in higher percentages than ever in the state. This past year's mayoral primary in the city of Los Angeles saw Latino participation surpass that of African Americans, traditionally a higher-propensity voting bloc. Latinos' proportion of the off-year electorate also matched that of another high-propensity voting group — white Jewish liberals who inhabit the city's Westside and portions of the San Fernando Valley.

"A tremendous number of them are first-time voters, either through naturalization or through coming of age," said Pachon, whose institute conducted extensive research on racial attitudes and voting trends in Southern California. "It's an electorate that's being supplied by new streams of voters that are not present among non-Hispanic voters."

The transformation is still a long way from dramatically affecting statewide outcomes. Anglo voters still comprised nearly three-fourths of the electorate in '96 and were roughly two-thirds of the voting universe in the L.A. municipal elections. But there was more than enough happening on the margins to hint of what's to come, and it wasn't just in Lynwood.

- Latino membership in the state Assembly grew from nine to 14. All five of the newcomers — four Democrats and one Republican — were elected in districts previously represented by whites.
- Japanese American Democrat Mike Honda beat out three Democratic rivals to win a safe San Jose Assembly district that was 50 percent Latino and 23 percent Asian. Honda's campaign slogan: *Si Se Puede* ("Yes, you can").
- Latina Democrat Loretta Sanchez narrowly upset GOP icon Robert Dornan in an Orange County congressional race that turned on the votes of newly-naturalized citizens voting in their first election. Although the result has been the subject of a year-long voter fraud investigation, four years earlier, a Latino couldn't even win the Democratic nomination to face Dornan.
- Higher than expected Latino turnout boosted the margins of victory for both Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and a crucial school construction bond for Los Angeles Unified School District.
- Latinos now occupy both the chairmanship of the state Democratic Party (Art Torres) and the speakership of the state Assembly (Cruz Bustamante).

Of course, Latino political leaders have been trying for decades to motivate the so-called "sleeping giant" of potential Hispanic voters, without success. So why the sudden interest in politics? Democrats and demographic researchers say a good deal of the credit goes to one man: Governor Pete Wilson.

Wilson all but merged his 1994 reelection campaign with the effort to pass Proposition 187, an initiative aimed at cutting off all but emergency services to illegal immigrants. While Wilson insisted he had no quarrel with legal immigrants, the tenor of his campaign advertising left many Latino and Asian immigrants feeling under attack, regardless of citizenship or socioeconomic status. The alienation from Wilson and his party deepened two years later. The governor embraced Proposition 209, another racially charged initiative which sought to ban affirmative action, and a new Republican Congress, warmed to Wilson's issue, approved legislation restricting public services to all non-citizens, legal or illegal. A rush to naturalization ensued, and when all those newly-naturalized citizens went to register to vote, they had one clear enemy in their minds. "The initiatives won, the Republicans lost," said Tony Quinn, a Republican analyst and political consultant.

"Pete Wilson will be known in the future as the 'father' of Latino California," said Gregory Rodriguez, research fellow at Pepperdine University's Institute for Public Policy. "He's done what thousands of activists could never have done. He gave us a massive civics lesson, and ... made people decide where they want to be. He pushed people off the fence."

Though few Republicans are willing to publicly blame Wilson for turning many Latinos against their party, most concede the GOP's image among Latino and Asian immigrant groups has been tarnished by the two initiative fights, especially among middle-class Latino citizens, who had been trending the GOP's way. Stuart Spencer, a GOP guru and

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former political advisor to President Ronald Reagan, was sufficiently exercised about his party's trend that he wrote its leaders a three-page memo warning of a descent into "permanent minority status" if more wasn't done to reach out to Latinos and Asians.

"Our party has a sad and politically self-defeating history of alienating immigrants and new voters," wrote Spencer, in a memo endorsing Latino Reuben Barrales, GOP candidate for state treasurer.

Many other Republican activists and party professionals say they've been tarred with a bad rap by skilled Democratic spin doctors who, they say, played "the race card." GOP political consultant Wayne Johnson admits his party may have been "eating [its] seed corn" in '94 and '96 by focusing solely on the existing voter pool, rather than looking at how that pool might be changing. But he also insists Republicans were offended and caught off-guard by the charge that the initiatives were racially motivated, and were not able to effectively counterattack.

"To charge someone with racism is the ultimate smear," said Johnson. "It is a genuinely cheap shot, and the Democrats love to hurl it."

Drawing in new voters, however, is only part of the calculus which has produced the recent spate of Latino political victories. New confidence, maturity, and organizational skill are also evident in the efforts of Latino leaders in the Legislature to increase their numbers in Sacramento and Washington.

Murray

While Latino candidates in urban enclaves such as East Los Angeles continue to fit the liberal, pro-labor mold, more pragmatic candidates are emerging elsewhere in the state. Freshman Assemblyman Dennis Cardoza (D-Ceres), for instance, carried impeccable credentials with the important agricultural community in his district. Fellow Assembly freshman Tony Cardenas (D-San Fernando) was able to play up his ties to the district, having lived in the region longer than either of his two main primary opponents, both of whom were white. Many candidates backed by Latino Caucus chair Senator Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles) have also benefitted from the help of veteran Democratic political consultant Richard Ross.

This "crossover appeal" of the candidates has been matched with legislative priorities which mix a pragmatic emphasis on crime and education with strategic attempts to counter Wilson's perceived hard line on immigration. During this past year's budget fight, Speaker Cruz Bustamante (D-Fresno) inserted the issue of immigration directly into the budget debate, holding out for a state-only program to protect legal immigrants from losing food stamps. Eventually, he was forced to accept a compromise, but the mere fact he'd brought the subject up — to the obvious irritation of Senate President pro Tempore Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward) indicated the degree to which Latino leaders are asserting their independence.

"I'm a Latino and I'm proud of that, but I'm also an American and I'm proud of that, too," said Assemblyman Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Los Angeles), who serves as Bustamante's majority leader. "This 'Latino' agenda is really an American agenda."

The "agenda" has found support among most non-Hispanic Democrats, but that doesn't mean there is contentment under the Democratic "rainbow." "Politics is a zero sum game," said Rodriguez. "The more Latinos are elected, the fewer of someone else will be elected." Latino political prominence is ruffling feathers on L.A.'s Westside and in the parts of San Fernando Valley, traditionally the strongholds of the region's politically-influential Jewish community and the last reliably Democratic pocket of white voters. Cardenas' 1996 victory came in a district that had been represented by one-time Democratic Assembly leader Richard Katz. Jewish and Latino community leaders have squared off over the reconstruction of the earthquake-damaged County-USC hospital and building priorities for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Valley Assemblyman Robert Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys), who has ties to both communities, says the tensions are simply a "natural progression."

Honda

Perhaps a more visible sign of the new assertiveness of Polanco and other Latino leaders has been their forays into communities — such as Lynwood — which are led by African Americans but which have sizeable, even majority, Latino populations. In 1996, Polanco, Bustamante and other Latino leaders made strategic contributions in several legislative races dominated by black candidates, frequently squaring off against contenders with connections to more traditional black leaders such as Representative Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles). Political scientist Bruce Cain of the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, says these episodes may become even more frequent — and more productive — after the next redistricting. "In past [reapportionments] in Los Angeles, the trick has always been to make accommodations to Latinos by shoving African Americans [in districts] to the west," said Cain. "Nineteen-ninety-two was the last time they'll be able to do that."

While acknowledging that Latino leaders have become better at playing the game, African American political leaders

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insist observers should not make too much of the political tensions between the two groups. Assemblyman Kevin Murray (D-Los Angeles), chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, notes that none of the Latino gains in the Legislature came at the expense of African Americans. While black political influence has suffered in the short term, Murray blames it on the adjustment to life after term limits. "You're not really concerned about power if you have Willie Brown," said Murray. "We had a very good run, and we didn't anticipate [term limits]." As for the suggestion that African Americans could be redistricted out of power, Murray believes that, even if the districts change, their leadership will remain the same because the voter pool will remain the same.

"Once Latinos reach the socio-economic status when they become high propensity voters, they move out of the inner city," said Murray. "Everybody keeps predicting these battles between blacks and Latinos for mostly black seats. The reality is it is not going to happen."

So what is going to happen? Well, one thing upon which everyone agrees is that the rate of participation among Latinos is going to continue to climb. Quinn predicts Latinos' percentage of the electorate will grow about 1 to 2 percent a year until it peaks at about 35 percent sometime in the next century. Democrats are considerably more bullish. Ross paints a scenario which he believes could produce as many as 300,000 additional Democratic votes in 1998 alone, between the coming-of-age of young Latino voters and the continued enfranchisement of newly-naturalized citizens.

As working class non-voters become working class voters, the prospect for tension between Democratic constituencies also continues to grow. The man in the best position to bridge this gap is Bustamante. But while he has gone out of his way to be cordial to political leaders of other ethnicities, Bustamante has been unable to fully consolidate his speakership, leaving the field open to wannabes, some of whom are intent upon influencing the coming redistricting. As the battle for power of the urban core is joined, Democratic leaders also are confronted with the challenge of holding together the fragile gains seen in 1992 and 1996 among working class and suburban white voters. It was the desertion of these voters in the wake of 1978's Proposition 13 that produced the "Reagan Revolution."

"The notion that Ronald Reagan somehow created the 'Reagan Democrats' is absurd," said Ross. "We made the Reagan Democrats when we raised the property taxes of our mothers and fathers."

Ironically, Rodriguez believes the Democrats' best hope to meet this array of political challenges lay in another minority community which showed signs of coming of age in 1996 — Asian Americans. Asians' percentage of the 1996 electorate in California doubled over that in 1992, from 3 percent to 6 percent. While Asian contributors gained considerable — often unwelcome — attention in the aftermath of the election, the fact that they participated as dramatically as they did shows a new attentiveness to politics. Perhaps most important for Democrats, Asian candidates — such as Honda and Sacramento Representative Robert Matsui (D-Sacramento) have that all-important "crossover" appeal.

"Asian Americans are the most integrated residentially of all groups," said Rodriguez. "They play a very special role.

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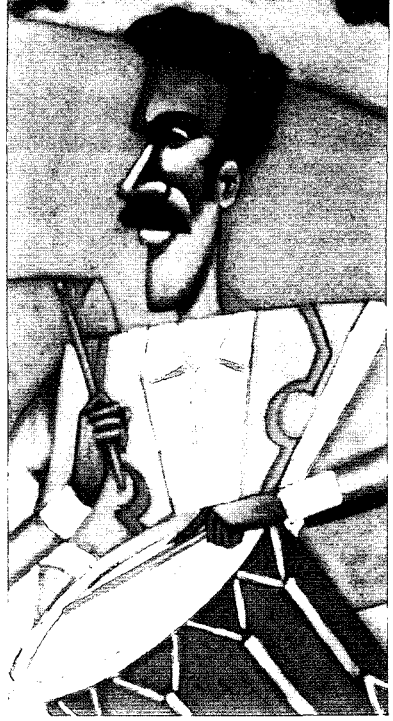
They're non-white, but they're not threatening to whites."

Asian candidates may also be one of the keys to helping Republicans rebound from the effects of the last few years. Like Democrats, Republicans are at a crossroads, divided between those who want to press ahead on the immigration and affirmative action fronts and those who want to downplay such "wedge" issues in favor of a return to basics. "A lot of things Republicans talk about with respect to lower taxes, et cetera are appealing [to middle-class Latinos]," said Quinn.

"[In our polling], 30 to 35 percent of Latinos say they'd vote for Republicans in the future," said Pachon. "This is not a lock for the Democratic Party, and it's not a complete shutout for the Republicans."

Before the GOP can win back its share of minority voters on the merits, however, they have the larger task of rebuilding trust among alienated immigrant constituencies. Although Johnson believes his U.S. Senate client, Matt Fong, has the potential to be a bridge builder, he laments that "we [Republicans] do not have leadership in which they can have confidence."

Many believe the key to the future lies in the 1998 statewide elections, especially the coming contest over bilingual education. The initiative to all but eliminate multiple-language instruction in state schools will likely be on the June ballot and already both parties are scrambling to react. Republican Party leaders tried to keep the GOP from going public with its support at the party's autumn state convention, only to have the rank-and-file vote to endorse it anyway. The GOP's membership looked positively prescient when a subsequent *Los Angeles Times* poll showed the measure with broader support among Latinos than among the general population. Bustamante's Assembly leadership team, which had summarily blocked a reform bill which had passed the Senate, are now scrambling to put forth a more modest reform.

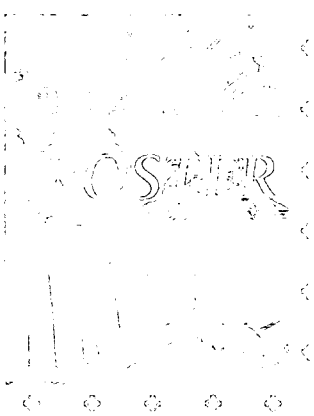


Rodriguez said the *Times* poll was a deserved comeuppance for a leadership sometimes guilty of what he referred to as "linear orthodoxy," and is a sign of political maturity among Latino voters. "That means we've grown up ... that we don't need lawyers to do our speaking for us," said Rodriguez. For Republicans to take advantage, however, all depends on how the campaign is ultimately conducted.

"It was not the content of [Propositions 187 and 209], but rather it was the way they were played out," said Quinn. "As long as that doesn't happen [with bilingual education], it [Latino backlash] is a transient thing. As long as Republicans support [the initiative] for the right reasons."

And as both parties have learned over the course of the last few years, sometimes doing something for the "right reason" can make all the difference.

THE 1998 ROSTERS



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The Bottom Line

commentary

by Susan Rasky

Breaking out

Like Madrid, the 26-year-old deputy political director of the California Republican Party, has a career dilemma, something he talks about with other budding political operatives — people like Jonathan Choy, a veteran of the Proposition 209 campaign, and Glen Becerra, who runs a political action committee aimed at promoting Latino candidates.

What Madrid really wants to do some day is start his own consulting firm. So, he keeps asking, should he stay in the party job, hoping that his responsiblities and political contacts grow as the 1998 election season heats up? Or would he get better experience by signing on with the major Republican consulting firm that has been wooing him for the past several months?

"I don't want to be pigeon-holed as the 'Hispanic Outreach Boy.' That's my real dilemma," he says. "I have a broader range of political skills than just that specialty. On the other hand, my party has a problem with Latino voters, and I, as a strategist, want to try and solve it."

If the message from the 1996 California election cycle was the emergence of a new cadre of Latino elected officials, the message for 1998 and 2000 is that a new cadre of political experts — not just Latinos, but also blacks, Chinese, Japanese and Koreans — may be breaking through as well. Hitherto largely invisible in staff and party jobs or the obscure political infrastructure of their own ethnic and racial communities, minority consultants are now poised to become players in the campaign industry.

"If you're asking me whether I'm expecting to see large numbers of African American or Latino consultants working campaigns in the white suburbs, the answer is 'no'," says Kerman Maddox, a long-time strategist for black politicians in Los Angeles, and co-host of L.A.'s widely respected public affairs television talk show, "Life and Times."

"But there is a change going on," says Maddox. "A recognition maybe that there are people in my community qualified to do full strategy, not just the black piece."

Unlike law or medicine, where there is at least a pretense that professional expertise is color blind, politics at its very core is about exploiting, creating or leveraging group identity to win elections. In a state where ethnic surname dictionaries and precision targeting of direct mail have been part of standard campaign technique for more than two decades, "minority consulting" is not new. Democrats certainly understand it as a specialized electioneering tool, and Republicans, as Madrid's situation suggests, are beginning to figure it out.

It is here where most minority consultants have found their point of entry. Maddox, the statewide deputy campaign manager for Tom Bradley's unsuccessful 1986 gubernatorial bid, says that even blacks who have done paid campaign work at the state level don't consciously think of themselves as political consultants. That's partly because "black consulting" historically has meant well-connected community leaders or activists helping non-black candidates get out the black vote. It's also because consulting and strategizing within the narrower confines of black electoral politics are viewed as a means, not an end.

"In this community the cause is about getting good people elected — once," says Maddox. "Then the cause is to serve with them as staff to change policy. The drive is not to be Maxine Waters' consultant, but to work with Maxine Waters."

Maddox's own career is a case in point — 20 years of hopscotching between staff and campaign jobs, paid and unpaid advance work for Democratic presidential candidates, even a run for city council himself in 1991. He has recently reestablished his public affairs and campaign consulting firm, Dakota Communications, and is currently advising — unpaid at his own request — the campaign of Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Al Checchi.

Although his work with Checchi involves traditional black community outreach, Maddox also knows that changing electoral arithmetic will force black consultants to adjust if they want to stay in business. "As a black consultant, you've got to be offering services that extend beyond the black electorate," he says. "Media: That's where the money is and that's the future for minority consultants."

But if minority consultants are able to move beyond their traditional niche, the intriguing question is whether it makes any difference — either in how campaigns are conducted, or how the issues that define them get framed. Catherine Lew would like to believe that it does. After six years of work for Bay Area ground campaign guru Larry Tramutola, she has teamed up with former broadcaster and black businessman Lloyd Edwards to form the Lew Edwards Group. The Oakland-based firm offers all the standard management, strategizing, media, direct mail and fundraising services, with the lofty aim of representing "women, people of color and constituencies that have been locked out." To do this, Lew promotes what she describes as a non-traditional, community-based approach to issue and candidate campaigns, a strategy forged in 18 years of community organizing.

"The whole climate is different now because of the open primary and the Proposition 208 funding restrictions," she says. "So the question is, with limited dollars, who do you campaign to? You can do it the old way, going after older, white, high-frequency voters, or you can get creative."

Contributing Editor Susan Rasky, a journalism professor at the University of California, Berkeley, is currently writing a book on political consulting.

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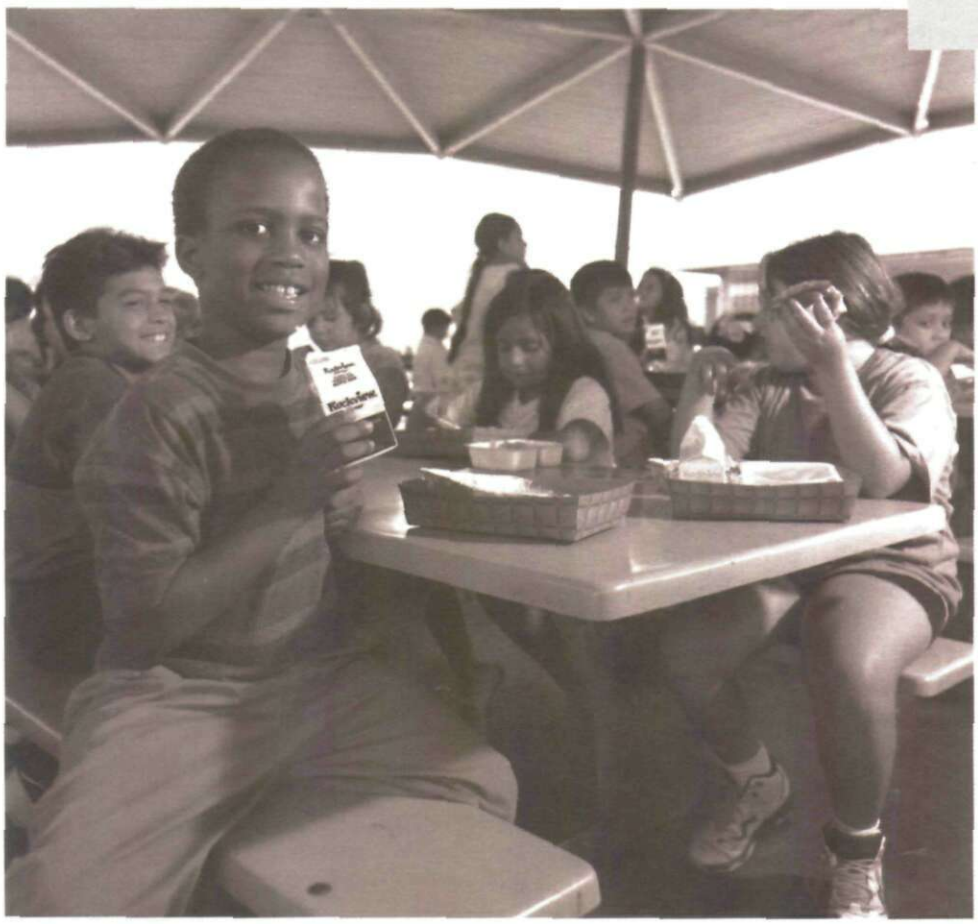
Los Angeles School

Does the nation's second largest school district have what it takes to educate a diverse, multicultural student population, and are its troubles a signal for all California?

By Sigrid Bathen

Lunchtime at Multonah Street Elementary School



The numbers are staggering. Total enrollment in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1996-97: 667,624 and climbing. Primary languages spoken by "limited English proficient" (LEP) students: more than 80, most of them Spanish-speaking (286,983), but also 4,923 Armenian, 3,916 Korean, 3,044 Chinese, 2,511 Filipino, 1,568 Vietnamese, 1,484 Russian, 899 Farsi, 730 Khmer, 471 Thai. Down the list in this dizzying linguistic melting pot to the double and finally the single digits: nine Finnish, six Nepali, five Swedish, five Yoruba, two each Afrikaans, Fijian, Javanese, Khmu, Marshallese, Melanesian, Norwegian and Mongolian. A sole Swahili speaker, an Albanian, a Cherokee, a Dane, a Guamanian and a Kurd.

In its 1996-97 Bilingual Program Survey required by the state Department of Education, the school district noted that "this was the sixth consecutive year in which the LEP enrollment exceeded the English-only student enrollment." Overall, the percentage of students whose primary language is English was 35 percent. In 1981-82, LEP students accounted for 22 percent of

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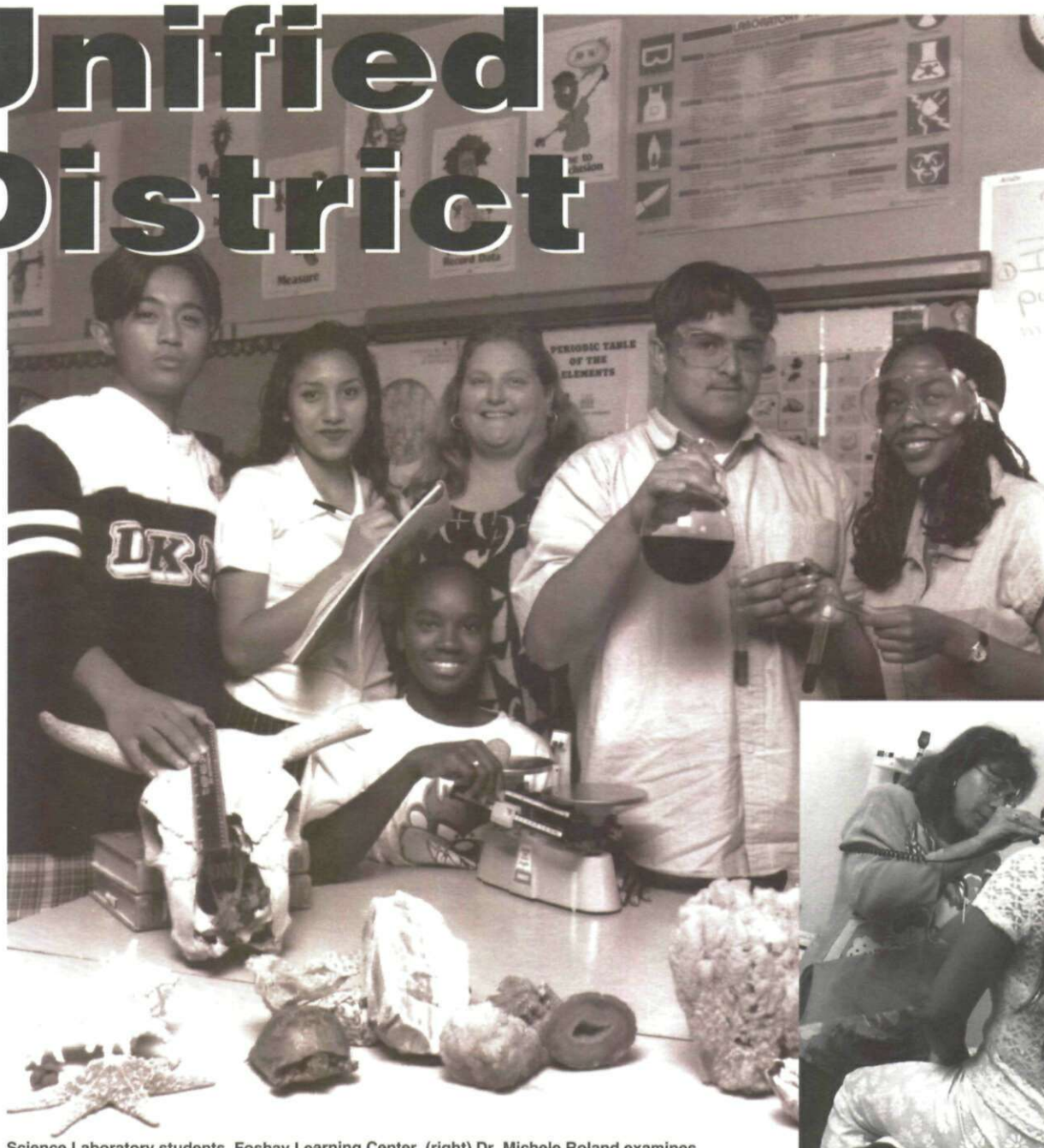
Unified District



Photos by Ken Coleman. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Science Laboratory students, Foshay Learning Center. (right) Dr. Michele Roland examines student at Hollywood High School Health Center.

total enrollment; by 1996-97, that figure had jumped to 47 percent.

By law, all must be educated, preferably in their native languages until they can transition into English — a process that school district officials say requires an average of five years, depending on the English proficiency of the students, the language spoken at home, and a variety of other educational, social and cultural factors. It is a daunting task, complicated by the poverty in which many recent immigrants live, the crime and decay in their mostly central-city neighborhoods, and the dismal test scores and overcrowded, crumbling buildings at many of the schools they attend.

As of fall 1996, according to district figures, fully 68 percent of the student body in Los Angeles Unified was Hispanic, with African Americans a distant second at 14 percent, non-Hispanic whites 11 percent, Asians 4.4 percent and Filipinos 1.9 percent. Only .7 percent were classified as Pacific Islander/American Indian/Alaska Native. In the 100 schools with the lowest test scores, white students account for only 1.6 percent, according to a recent *Los Angeles Times* survey of the district's 100 "lowest performing" schools. Latinos accounted for 72.3 percent, blacks 23.2 percent and Asian/Pacific Islanders 9 percent.

The *Times* survey was published in July 1997, in response to Superintendent Ruben Zacarias' controversial move to target the 100 worst performing schools among the more than 600 schools in the district. It found that more than 42 percent of the students in those schools came from families on welfare, compared to 30 percent in a sampling of 465 other schools in the district.

Critics have long complained that the sheer size of L.A. Unified — where

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Languages* of L.A. Unified

Language	# of LEP*
Afghan	18
Afrikaans	2
Albanian	1
Native American Languages:	
Cherokee	1
Other Native American	7
Amharic	80
Arabic	394
Armenian	4,923
Assyrian	55
Bengali	243
Bulgarian	39
Burmese	29
Chinese Languages:	
Cantonese	2,206
Chin Chow	252
Mandarin (Putonghua)	257
Taiwanese	32
Toishanese	37
Other Chinese	260
Creole	16
Croatian	18
Czech	13
Danish	1
Dutch	17
Farsi (Persian)	899
Fijian	2
Finnish	9
French	69
German	24
Greek	11
Guamanian (Chamorro)	1
Gujarati	80
Hawaiian	3
Hebrew	220
Hindi	167
Hmong	11
Hungarian	37
Ibo	12
Indonesian	103
Italian	25

the student population is second only to New York City's one million students — makes it unmanageable, but others insist neither size nor the district's complex diversity are the sources of its problems. "Many districts have problems with size," says state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, "but they still perform well. Is there magic in size? I don't think so. But I do think when a district becomes dysfunctional, it's harder to reform. It's not impossible, but it is harder."

Eastin and others point to large urban districts they say are doing well, such as Long Beach and San Francisco — both of which have large minority and LEP populations and strong superintendents who have aggressively pressed for improved performance, even tying school performance to administrators' jobs. And she points to small beacons of light in Los Angeles — often charter schools, in poor and not-so-poor communities, where principals, teachers and parents have banded together to dramatically improve their children's education, and their test scores.

Test scores generally in L.A. Unified are among the lowest in the state — well below the 50th percentile which is the national average, with district ninth-graders scoring 25, 35 and 29 in reading, math and language, respectively. The scores at the 100 poorly performing schools identified by Zacarias are beyond the pale. Using the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and a similar test administered in Spanish, several schools hover in the single digits. Only seven of the 100 schools are in the San Fernando Valley, seat of secession proposals motivated by the poor performance of L.A. schools.

Many say the L.A. schools are unfairly criticized — and that they can be turned around. "Trying to educate a child in an atmosphere that is not conducive to learning is very difficult," says state Senator Teresa Hughes (D-Los Angeles), a former teacher and member of the Senate Education Committee whose district includes parts of South-Central Los Angeles. "We must realize too that the constituency in L.A. County is very fluid. People are constantly moving around, the family is often uprooted, children transferred from school to school. There is no continuity. These are fantastic obstacles put in the way of learning."

Three of the schools on Zacarias' target list are among those served by the highly touted "10 School" program started 10 years ago in some of the district's toughest schools in Watts and South-Central L.A., including six schools cheek-by-jowl with huge, crime-ridden public housing projects. There was a time when all of the 10 probably would have been on the list, but major infusions of money, time and talent were put into the schools, and many have shown phenomenal improvements, including reduced teacher turnover, more parental involvement, higher test scores and reduced school crime. One elementary school next to the infamous Nickerson Gardens public housing project posted third-grade test scores in the 61st percentile (the national average is 50), a far cry from its single-digit figures when the program started. The LEP students, in fact, posted higher scores than their English-speaking counterparts. Highly structured and run by a tough, longtime teacher-administrator, Dr. Theodore Alexander, who also runs the district's magnet school program, the 10 schools have seen results, although critics say the results have been expensive and difficult to replicate district-wide.

For those who work, and learn, in the lowest-performing schools, the stigma can be particularly stinging. "Emotionally, it's hard on the staff to be named the lowest," Cynthia Dugan, principal at the 102nd Street School, which is 19th on the list (on a "worst" to "best" scale of 1-100), told a *Times* reporter. "We know that people will not look at many of the factors we face." — factors such as grinding poverty, child hunger, family breakdown, high transiency and, in some cases, parental drug use. Add to these high teacher and administrator turnover, resulting in a lower per-pupil spending ratio which in turn resulted in protracted litigation in the courts. Many teachers in the lowest performing schools are inexperienced, beginning teachers, and hence lower-paid, which drags down the average spending figure and, critics say, the quality of the children's education.

"What we discovered was that there was no such thing as equity," said Silvia Argueta, a staff attorney with the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), which successfully sued the district in 1985, working out a settlement in 1992 known as the Rodriguez consent decree. She said the district has since made considerable

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tudents at Dixie Canyon E ementary school (which recently got air onditioning with the passage of a bond issue. Summer temperatures ere can reach 110 degrees.)

progress in equalizing per-pupil spending from a $500-700 difference to within $100 of other schools, as required by the consent decree.

A major focus of the MALDEF suit, which was joined by numerous other educational and legal services groups, was the district practice of assigning novice teachers at lower salaries to heavily minority schools in poor communities where the primary language was not English. "It has been a practice in the district that must stop," said school board member Barbara Boudreaux, in whose district one-third of the 100 worst performing schools are located. "You will not assign unsatisfactory teachers, marginal teachers, insensitive teachers to one school." She said most of the complaints she receives from parents concern teacher turnover and inconsistent, inferior instruction.

Zacarias, 68, a longtime district teacher and administrator who has the support of teachers and principals in his 100-school effort, agrees that teacher turnover is a major problem for the schools. The new superintendent, who took over the huge district last June, is the son of Mexican immigrants and only the second Latino to serve as superintendent.

Like teachers, administrators and students in the targeted schools, Zacarias flinches at the "worst school" label. "They're not the worst schools," he says. "This is not just about 100 schools needing to improve. Every school has to improve. I personally am focusing on 100 schools, but when I'm through with them I will go on to 100 more schools.

"In many of these schools, 30 to 50 percent of their faculty are new — teachers who for the most part are being hired with emergency credentials. Where are we putting them? In the primary grades in some of the poorer schools." Zacarias has requested additional funding to augment state funding for class-size reduction and other programs to improve teacher training and expand the mentor teacher program. He is also seeking additional resources to expand after-school and Saturday tutoring.

Zacarias says he is also reviewing each low-performing school classroom-by-classroom. "It's amazing that I've found kids who have met or surpassed national norms in reading and math," he said. "Yet I ask if these kids are [classified as] 'gifted,' and in too many cases, the answer has been 'no.'" Gifted programs so common to suburban and many urban schools throughout California are practically nonexistent, Zacarias said, in the 100 most poorly performing schools of L.A. Unified.

Although strongly supportive of bilingual education, Zacarias said not enough attention has been paid in the district to "redesignating" non- or limited-English speakers when they have gained some fluency in English. "In some cases," he said, "schools didn't have bilingual coordinators with enough experience, or they might not have paid that much attention. I've made them focus on the need to redesignate these children, when proper. I'm not suggesting putting a kid in a class they're not ready for ... but we need to find a faster way to transition."

Beyond the issues of size and diversity, critics of district administration say much of the difficulty in L.A. Unified is related to the so-called "site-based management" popular among many district administrators. "School-based management does not work in a district with massive transiency," says one highly placed state educator knowledgeable about the district, who asked not to be identified. "Kids move school to school, and turnover rates can exceed 100 percent." Schools may not utilize the same teaching methods — so-called "whole language," for example, to teach reading in one school, phonics in another — and children moving from school to school become confused.

David Tokovsky, an outspoken

Japanese	186
Javanese	2
Kanjobal	10
Khmer	730
Khmu	2
Korean	3,916
Kurdish	1
Lao	76
Latvian	3
Lithuanian	10
Malay	8
Marshallese	2
Melanesian	2
Mongolian	2
Nepali	6
Norwegian	2
Pashto	56
Philippine Language	
Ilocano	96
Pilipino (Tagalog)	2,233
Visayan (Cebuano)	21
Other Philippine	161
Polish	58
Portuguese	84
Punjabi	291
Rumanian	59
Russian	1,484
Samoan	102
Serbian	16
Serbo-Croatian	30
Sinhalese	17
Slovak	4
Spanish	286,983
Swahili	1
Swedish	5
Thai	471
Tongan	84
Turkish	23
Ukranian	16
Urdu	198
Vietnamese	1,568
Yoruba	5
Others, Not Listed	204
Total LEP*	**309,802**
Total Enrollment	**667,624**

* Primary Languages of K-12 Limited English Proficient Students, 1996-1997
Source: Los Angeles Unified School District

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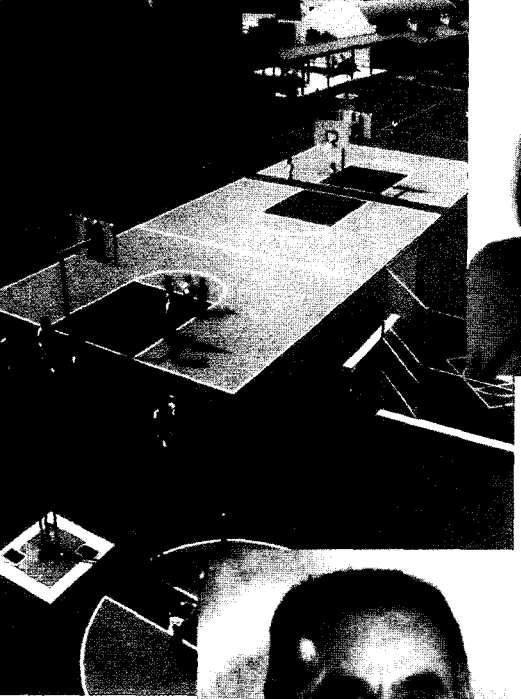

Playground at Gratts Elementary School

Victoria Castro, Board of Education, LAUSD

Dr. Ruben Zacarias, 43rd Superintendent, LAUSD

former social studies teacher who is a member of the district school board, is highly critical of the district's entrenched bureaucracy. He says change is glacial, if it occurs at all, and the L.A. schools generally "are doing a poor job for all students, whether they be LEP, special education, gifted or middle-class," with instructional decisions made haphazardly and without measurable standards and evaluation. "We all need to ... look at what we actually teach and how we measure it. We have 100 schools that have been flatliners [in test scores] for 25 years."

Passage of a major $2.4 billion bond issue last spring will bring much-needed revenue for repairs and construction in L.A. Unified. The optimists in the district — and there are many — say the bond money as well as increasing levels of support and attention to the long-neglected system by politicians and community leaders may be the push that is needed to move the behemoth down the path of significant reform. Mayor Richard Riordan has made the L.A. schools a top priority, and the massive, five-year-old community-based and foundation-funded program called LEARN (the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now) says schools adopting the LEARN model — which is voluntary and includes intensive teacher involvement and training — are showing major improvements in student achievement, parental involvement and lowered crime rates. The project is operating in 327 L.A. schools.

"I will not sit here and tell you that it is an easy accomplishment to get 327 schools operating in an exemplary fashion," says LEARN's top executive, Mike Roos, a former Democratic assemblyman who left the Legislature in 1991 for LEARN. "It is almost axiomatic that without a strong principal — a collaborator, a visionary, an entrepreneur who can get community support — the school can't possibly succeed."

And nowhere is the challenge of turning around the L.A. schools more daunting than in the central city. LAUSD school board member Victoria Castro, a former teacher and junior high school principal in East L.A., was born and raised in the district she now represents. "I grew up on an after-school playground. My parents both worked, and there were people there to take care of us. We don't have those services anymore. One of the elementary schools in my district has more than 1,000 students and not one lives in a single-home dwelling. They all live in apartments or motels. It's the closest think you can get to tenement housing in California.

"Southern California is supposed to be grass and yards, and these kids deal with streets, alleys, motels, hourly prostitution, parks that are not safe. On Monday mornings, they have to sweep the sandboxes for syringes. And yet there is some remarkable teaching going on."

Many students in Castro's Second District live near aging, overcrowded schools and must be bused, mostly to the San Fernando Valley. Some elementary schools have 2,000 kids, one middle school has 4,000, and three high schools are on year-round schedules because of overcrowding. "We have children entering kindergarten," she says, "and getting on busses to ride 40-45 minutes."

Increasingly, schools in impoverished areas must be much more than schools. Three-fourths of L.A. Unified students are eligible for free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches, which may be their only meals of substance. Recognizing the lack of health care for many children, the district has established health clinics at several schools. Increased efforts are being made to involve parents — a key element in any school reform effort — and some schools offer English classes to parents as well as kids.

"You can't separate education from the home and the community," says state Senator Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles), a former teacher and L.A. Unified board member who serves on the Senate Education Committee. "When I was a child welfare and attendance officer [for the district], I would have to go into the homes of the children. I especially remember the case of a kindergarten child the teacher asked me to check on because he smelled of urine. He lived in the back of a house over a garage. I had to step over sleeping bodies. The mother looked like she had overdosed. But that kid would get himself up, get himself to school. I told the teacher whatever time he arrived, she should hug him and nurture him and help him."

Any notion that poor, minority kids in urban school districts have too many strikes against them to learn incenses long-time educators like Marion Joseph, for 12 years a top aide to former state Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles. Now a vocal member of the state Board of Education, Joseph sighs when asked about L.A Unified.

"Learning to read, spell, write and compute, learning to listen — those are the work of the schools. Those are the things children need to succeed. If because of societal problems, the school cannot do what it is charged with, then someone has to wonder, why have them? Somebody is getting paid huge budgets to accomplish something that cannot be accomplished. I don't think this is true."

"I think these kids can learn," insists Joseph, "if there is a well-thought-out, well-organized, well-run program with trained teachers. There is enough evidence of schools in serious ghetto areas that work."

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by Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

Bilingual bellwether?

Orange County has provided an early peek at how the issue of bilingual education might play out in this year's state elections.

Last November, voters in the Orange Unified School District (OUSD) overwhelmingly approved advisory Measure A, which asked whether they agreed "with the recent decision of the Orange Unified School District to replace the bilingual education program with an English immersion literacy program." Eighty-six percent of the electorate answered "yes." Only 14 percent said "no."

So what. Typical of that bastion of rich, white, conservative Republicanism, you say? Look again. It's rash to chalk up Measure A's lop-sided support to an Orange County which no longer exists. Politically, the county is moving to the center. In University of California Irvine's 1996 Orange County Annual Survey, 33 percent of the residents described themselves as "middle-of-the-road" (compared with 26 percent in1990); only 9 percent called themselves "very conservative" (compared with 13 percent in 1990), and 6 percent identified themselves as "very liberal" (compared with 9 percent in 1990).

Demographically, Orange County is changing too. In 1980, the county's population was 78 percent white, 15 percent Latino, 5 percent Asian and 1 percent African-American. By 1990. It was 65 percent white, 23 percent Latino, 10 percent Asian and 2 percent black. Once renowned for its "affluent" image, Orange County is beginning to reflect the socioeconomic disparities which threaten Los Angeles. According to analyst Joel Kotkin, south Orange County is booming, but "working-class immigrant neighborhoods in Santa Ana and surrounding communities" in the central county "are still struggling."

OUSD serves some of these communities. Its student population of some 28,000 is roughly 50 percent white, 34 percent Latino, 11 percent Asian, 2 percent black; OUSD is "often viewed," according to the *Orange County Register*, "as a bellwether district in Southern California." Since 1993 the district's seven-member board has been dominated by "back-to-basics," social conservatives. Measure A was the board's response to protests by parents and Latino groups who charged board members ignored public opinions in deciding to shift to "English immersion" teaching.

A coalition of centrists, liberals, Latino advocacy groups and teachers' unions formed around several issues — including bilingual education; it aimed to take control of the school board. The Orange Unified Education Association, and the California Teachers Association; spent at least $60,000 in support of four union-endorsed candidates on the November ballot. Nonetheless, conservatives emerged from a contentious campaign with an increased board majority.

Did the union's pro-lingual stance doom the OUSD candidates it endorsed? Wayne Johnson, vice president of the CTA, told the *Los Angeles Times* that the Orange Unified election was "the only significant loss for the union among 10 local school contests" on the November ballot. And he blamed that defeat — at least in part — on Measure A. Said Johnson, "That obviously pulled out a lot of votes that normally would not have voted in this election."

Turnout was up over 5 percent from two years ago; but there are no exit polls available to identify who turned out in Orange County to vote for or against Measure A. Did the issue motivate conservative voters? Or Latinos? What was the breadth and depth of support for ending bilingual education among various constituencies? How might that translate statewide?

Ron Unz's "English for the Children" Initiative, which would dismantle bilingual education programs in California schools, is heading for the June 1998 ballot. Will the debate over that proposition polarize the electorate? Could the statewide campaign become heated and divisive, as combatants attempt to energize their electoral base? Might CTA's opposition to the Unz intitative threaten union-backed candidates in 1998 races?

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, up for re-election, opposes the Unz initiative. Could her stand make her vulnerable? Hers is a non-partisan office; if Eastin garners over 50 percent of the vote, she would win re-election outright in the primary. Could fall-out from an anti-bilingual measure on the same ballot help push her into a November runoff?

The day after the OUSD election, Governor Pete Wilson touted his education agenda before the Orange County Forum, a bipartisan group of county business and governmental leaders. He hardly touched on Measure A's landslide victory. His reticence makes sense; bilingual education presents the Republican governor with a potentially no-win issue.

Party activists endorsed the Unz initiative at the last state GOP convention. And Wilson needs these partisans — for another presidential flirtation or to give him friendly legislators. Conversely, there is great nervousness among party leaders that opposition to bilingual education could backfire. Harry Pachon, director of the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, characterized the confrontation over bilingual education which faced Orange as a potential "third strike" affecting California minorities, following on the heels of Propositions 187 and 209. And that could result, he predicted, in Latinos becoming more politically active.

The harsh rhetoric that permeated debate over immigration and affirmative action saddled Republicans with a mean-spirited, hard-right image. In the 1996 elections, it cost them dearly among California's burgeoning minority populations. A divisive fight over bilingual education could give the GOP an even bigger political headache this year — when the governorship, a U.S. Senate seat and control of the Legislature are on the line.

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The media covers race

A black journalist takes a personal look at the way the media report on race in America.

By Ginger Rutland

As a black woman, a consumer of race news for over 40 years and a practioneer of the news trade for 26 — first as a television reporter and for the past nine years on the editorial board of *The Sacramento Bee* — I have some thoughts on how the media cover race.

At the outset, I want to make one point crystal clear: I speak only for myself. Some black folks may agree with what I say; some may not. But I won't insult black people by pretending to speak for us all. We are too large, too diverse, too complicated and too rich a collection of individuals for anyone to believe that a single person speaks for all.

This brings me to my first criticism of the way race is covered — the media's endless search for the authentic black "voice" who can translate for the rest of the country what blacks think — as if we all are joined at the brain stem. We aren't, and no such person exists. It is particularly galling when reporters trot off to the local NAACP office for quotes whenever anything "racial" happens. In Sacramento, 288 people voted last year in the election for the presidency of the local branch of the NAACP. The winner in that contest received 116 votes and can speak for some but not all of Sacramento County's 97,129 black residents.

By the way, I generally refer to black people as blacks, not African Americans. I like the word. It has only one syllable. It's clean, uncomplicated and direct. By contrast, African American is an awkward mouthful and, for me, uncomfortably trendy. I confess my preference may be generational. I grew up in the 1950s when black wasn't beautiful; it was an insult. I spent my college years trying to convince my parents to switch from "Negro" to "black." Since I succeeded, I have a lot of emotion invested in the word. So it annoys me that

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Ginger Rutland is an associate editor and editorial writer for The Sacramento Bee.

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CHICANO

under-represente

minori

Afro-American

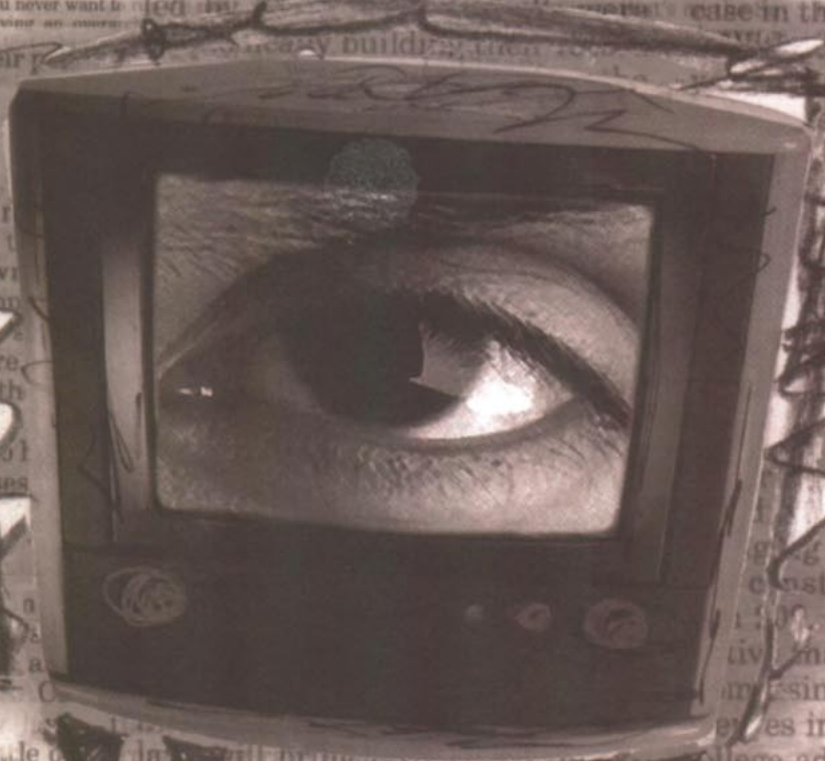
ASIAN

Chinamen

latino

WASP

hispanic



BLACK

Jew

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so many newspapers require the use of the term African American exclusively. It smacks of a too-eager desire to cater to the grumpiest and most pretentious of the nation's black activists. This is not an issue unique to blacks. In their zeal not to offend, news directors at television stations and newspaper editors allow the most vocal to dictate how a community is to be labeled. I was once instructed by a television boss never to use the word "homosexual" when reporting about gays. African Americans, gays, Hispanics, Asians, women, the developmentally disabled, the physically challenged, undocumented immigrants — the list of permissible and impermissible labels grows and so, I fear, does the confusion of our collective audience.

To its credit, the media have done a good job documenting the historic struggle for black equal rights. It was the images of black high schoolers at Little Rock, Arkansas, the snarling dogs and fire hoses in Selma, Alabama, and the sit-ins across the South that fueled my passion to become a reporter. I wanted to tell those stories.

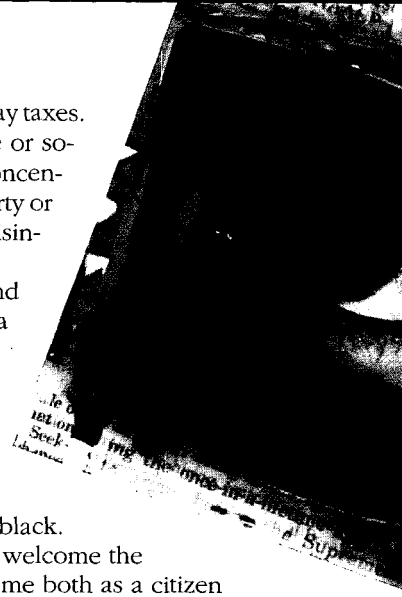
Sadly, the dominant media image of blacks has changed — from innocent victims struggling for civil rights to violent young criminals or welfare moms. This trend is distressing because it fuels a fear of black people that has grave consequences for the young men in my family. While I recognize the nuances of class, too often the media — particularly television — fail to communicate it. Police frequently can't tell the difference between my sheltered nephews and gang bangers. Neither can cab drivers or department store clerks.

And yet, the disproportionate numbers of black men in prison and black children living in poverty are stories that must not be ignored. Any reporter who's ever been inside a prison is struck by it. Certainly, racism plays a role, and I think the media have done a good job to document that — from the Rodney King affair and all the fallout surrounding it to the infamous Los Angeles police detective Mark Furhman to the recent brutal beating of a Haitian immigrant, allegedly by New York City police.

But it's not all racism. Black crime and poverty are also reflections of devastating economic and social collapse in poor black neighborhoods, the scourge of drug addiction, family disintegration, bad schools and the flight of the more stabilizing community influences, especially upper- and middle-class blacks, to the suburbs. The underclass left behind is in deep trouble.

The media fail to communicate, however, that a similar collapse is spreading among whites. But because white poverty is more diffuse, hidden among sprawling suburbs and in vast rural expanses, it's harder to document. Also, the major media outlets, whether newspapers or television, are located in cities. City-based assignment editors generally dispatch their crime beat and welfare reporters to downtown welfare offices and the urban ghettoes where crime rages and minorities live. By doing so, we leave the mistaken impression that crime and poverty always wear a black face.

The distortion is exacerbated by the fact that the black community is organized politically in a way that focuses sharp regular attention on the plight of the most troubled among us. That attention — whether a Jesse Jackson rally for equality and jobs or a Million Man March — highlights the blacks living in poverty and ignores the vast majority who work, support their kids and pay taxes. No comparable political force or social institution focuses such concentrated attention on white poverty or white crime or white family disintegration.



The confusion over race and class perpetuated by the media can be annoying, as when it makes it more difficult for a middle-class black to cash a check or, frighteningly, as when police stop and question my mild-mannered brother solely because he's black. Despite the hurt and hassle, I welcome the insights such confusion gives me both as a citizen and a reporter. It keeps those of us who are black and think we've "arrived" connected with those who are stuck in inferior schools and dangerous neighborhoods — and that's not a bad thing, especially for a reporter.

Because so much race information is routinely collected and delivered to reporters, we often inject race into stories when it's not relevant. For example, in November 1997 the California Department of Corrections reported on the alarming number of new inmates admitted to prison who were infected with a virulent strain of hepatitis. Although there was no indication that race was a factor in the infection — that one race or ethnic group was biologically more susceptible to the infection than another — most of the news reports on the subject included the department's chart detailing how many black, white and Hispanic inmates were infected. Why was this relevant?

As reporters and editors, we need constantly to ask: Is race relevant? If the answer is "yes," then we have a responsibility to tell readers why it is relevant. If the answer is "no," then we ought not to inject it into a story. By injecting the incendiary element of race, we heighten racial consciousness and anxiety in ways that are both misleading and destructive.

Even where race is arguably relevant, we often fail to probe beyond it. Thus, each year we report the results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in racial terms — how blacks, whites, Asians and Hispanics scored. While there may be reasons to question why it is necessary to report those scores in racial terms, let's assume for the moment that it is a valid approach. Still, it is not the only approach. Other factors may also affect test scores, and as a reader I want to know more about the test takers than their race. What, for instance, are their family incomes and the educational backgrounds of their parents? Which test takers had after-school jobs? Which ones took expensive SAT cram courses and how did they score on average? How good are SAT scores at predicting success in college, or success after college? And, most important for my own kid's sake, how many hours a night did the average top scorer study? By failing to ask more questions, the false and dangerous message conveyed is that race, not hard work, determines academic success.

Conversely, too many newspapers ignore race when its relevance is obvious. A controversy rumbles in the hallways of my own paper, *The Sacramento Bee*, over whether to report the race of suspects when we have only the most general description beyond race, usually approximate height

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and weight. The paper's policy is not to report race under those circumstances. I think that's wrong.

If a suspected murderer or rapist is at large, and all the information available is that he's a black man of medium build and height or a tall thin white man, that represents a lot of information, particularly given the enormous diversity of this state. In a given city or, more typically, the few square blocks surrounding a crime scene, the suspect's race can help a potential witness focus and recall. To fail to report race because an editor fears it will increase the chance that police will stop an innocent suspect — even my mild-mannered brother — is nuts. The cops have the complete description, race and all; they're stopping people who fit the description. Certainly some people in the wider public will react in a racist manner to a racial identity, but others won't. Withholding information won't make anyone more or less racist or protect innocent black men from being hassled by cops.

My few remaining criticisms concern tone and context. Too many reporters are caught in the time warp of the civil rights era when the good guys fought for integration. For that reason, we sometimes report with unwarranted dismay and alarm the self-segregation that takes place in our society. Folks who have a shared cultural background gravitate towards each other, whether it be elderly Chinese immigrants, young black professionals or the "jocks" in the high school cafeteria. That's not racism; it's normal human behavior, and we ought not to worry about it as much as we do.

In addition, we tend to compare every minority experience with the black experience. Being gay is not the same as being black; being disabled is not the same as being black; being a woman is not the same as being black, and to equate them is to trivialize and misunderstand both experiences. It's also profoundly insulting to many blacks.

Finally, we all need to back off, all the self-described oppressed minorities. I don't mean that the problems faced by blacks, women, gays and the disabled, among others, are not real or serious. But, we are at once too sensitive and too anxious. Fears of being labeled, among other things, racist, sexist or homophobic get in the way of honest reporting and editing.

There is reason to believe that things are changing. The many dimensions of the black experience are beginning to emerge. Some newspapers have consciously gone out to seek diversity in the range of "experts" they regularly quote in fields like science, business, medicine or corporate law, and that's a good trend. For all the anguish it caused for the individuals involved, the televised confirmation hearings of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas exposed Americans of all colors to an array of blacks who had graduated from the nation's top universities and who had wildly divergent views on core national issues of race and gender. That's instructive for us all.

Just last fall, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published on its front page the picture of two radiant black female physicians who'd delivered the McCaughey septuplets in Iowa. More than all the treatises on race and class and gender, that one picture communicated the black diversity that exists, how far we — black people and the nation — have come and how well folks from different walks of life get along.

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Washington Notes

perspective

by Herbert Sample

New alliances

While Ward Connerly and Newt Gingrich fret over affirmative action, while President Bill Clinton appoints commissions and holds town hall meetings on race relations, two members of Congress from the Los Angeles region are doggedly forging political ties that could result in better relations and heightened influence for Latinos and African Americans in California and across the nation.

For about a year now, Representatives Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles) and Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles) have not only headed up their respective voting blocs on Capitol Hill — Becerra as chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Waters as head of the Congressional Black Caucus — but also actively improved relations between the two groups and their larger communities.

Such cooperation between the two largest minority caucuses in Congress has more often been the exception rather than the rule over the past couple of decades. And it is a problematic time to be breaking bread together, as a bulging Latino community, aware of its growing size and influence, flexes its new-found political and economic muscle — particularly in California where the Latino population is approaching 30 percent and its share of voters is rising significantly as well. Meanwhile, many in the African American community, whose size is increasing at a much slower rate, worry they may lose hard-fought economic, social and cultural gains as a result.

But a number of political battles since 1995 over immigration, affirmative action, welfare and other issues that impact their constituents have brought the two lawmakers and their colleagues together. One high-profile recent example was the debate over the use of statistical sampling in the 2000 census, a subject that was well-suited to the political and policy needs of both caucuses.

The 1990 census, using traditional headcount methods, missed several million U.S. residents — particularly Latinos, African American males and the poor. The U.S. Census Bureau wanted to avoid a rerun in 2000, so it devised a plan to utilize statistical estimates to compensate for people the usual techniques don't reach.

But Republican House leaders feared an accounting of people who tend to vote Democratic would skew the next reapportionment against them, and they fought a month-long battle to block sampling. Democrats and the Clinton administration, aware that it was in their best political interests to support it, did so.

That's where the Latino and black caucuses came in. Because they represent most of the folks who were missed in 1990 and are likely to be undercounted again in 2000 unless sampling is utilized, both groups found an issue they could galvanize around without much of the friction that accompanied other subjects the groups have tackled.

"If it were not for the critical mass of the two caucuses combined, the Republicans would have been able to drive the appropriation bill [containing language banning sampling] much quicker," Becerra said in a recent interview. As it turned out, sampling will be tested next year in a census dress rehearsal in Sacramento, but its use in the 2000 count awaits future legislative and judicial skirmishes.

Following the old adage "no permanent allies, no permanent friends, just permanent interests," the caucuses joined with Republicans and against the Clinton administration to significantly alter a national testing plan and to oppose the fast-track trade proposal. "This year has probably marked the strongest working relationship between the black caucus and the Hispanic caucus," Waters said in an interview. "It certainly has since I've been in Congress."

There were challenges as well. For example, Latino lawmakers are pushing to direct more federal funds toward colleges that enroll high percentages of Latinos. Some African Americans in Congress worry that may impinge on already tight allocations for historically black colleges.

While they may have accomplished better ties on Capitol Hill, Becerra and Waters know they have their work cut out to bring their constituents together at the street level, where attitudes are easy to form but difficult to alter. Waters, whose once overwhelmingly African American district is now 50 percent Latino, acknowledged that some of her black constituents are concerned.

"What you hear is a bit of envy and a bit of jealousy about gains that black people think that they fought very hard for and opened up the doors, and [about] a lot of other groups stepping into the opportunities that were created," she said. "The measure of leadership is not to allow or foster polarization ... I think we must accept the reality of the growth of the Hispanic population and their desire to have power just like everybody else."

Becerra, though he approaches this issue from a different angle, is also sensitive to the potential tensions. "With money becoming tighter, it's natural for the African American constituency to say, 'We've got to protect what we have,'" he said. On the other hand, he added, "what you see is an ambitious, an aggressive, a yearning Latino community."

"So how do we coincide versus collide?" he asked. "That's one of the reasons why I think it's going to be important for Maxine and I to work hard at visibly showing how we can work together."

Herbert A. Sample is a reporter in The Sacramento Bee's *Washington Bureau.*

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Hepatitis epidemic found in prisons

Experts fear parolees may spread fatal blood disease

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — Hepatitis C, an often-fatal blood disease transmitted through contact with mucous and blood, has reached epidemic proportions in California's prison system, and experts fear parolees may spread the malady to the general population.

One survey by state health officials indicated that four in every 10 new inmates are infected with hepatitis C, and that there was no indication that the rate of infection is slowing down.

California's prisons hold about 155,000 inmates.

According to tests of new male prisoners conducted between August and October of 1994, nearly half of the 1,235 white inmates were infected with hepatitis C, nearly a third of 1,299 black prisoners had the disease and 40 percent of Latino inmates were infected.

Among incoming American Indian prisoners, nearly 58 percent of the men showed infection.

For female prisoners, although fewer in numbers, the proportions were even higher: For whites, the infection rates was 58 percent; 38 percent for African-Americans; 70 percent for Latinos; and nearly 88 percent for American Indians.

Details of the problem were reported yesterday in the California edition of *The Wall Street Journal*.

The San Diego Union Tribune, October 23, 1997

For Us, A Bad Day at Work Can Be A Real Killer

Overcrowding has turned California prisons into breeding grounds for violence and disease, exposing correctional peace officers and their families to terrible new risks.

Tuberculosis is on the rise. So are deadly diseases like AIDS and Hepatitis A, B and C.

Since these diseases are transmitted by blood or other bodily fluids, officers are exposed every time they break up a bloody fight among inmates — an almost daily occurrence.

Officers are exposed with each new "gassing" — a growing assault where inmates throw urine, feces, blood, semen or saliva in an officer's face.

Officers who are scratched or stabbed by inmates are also exposed, especially if the attacker smears feces on his blade before the assault — a favorite trick among inmates.

On average, five officers are now assaulted every day in California prisons. As assaults against correctional officers increase, so does the risk of disease.

When we have a bad day at work, it can be fatal.

Learn more about the dangers we face by calling Sharon Levesque at 916-372-6060 and asking for a free copy of our Emmy award-winning video "Behind the Wall," an unvarnished look at life inside California prisons.

California Correctional Peace Officers Association
755 Riverpoint Drive • West Sacramento, California 95605

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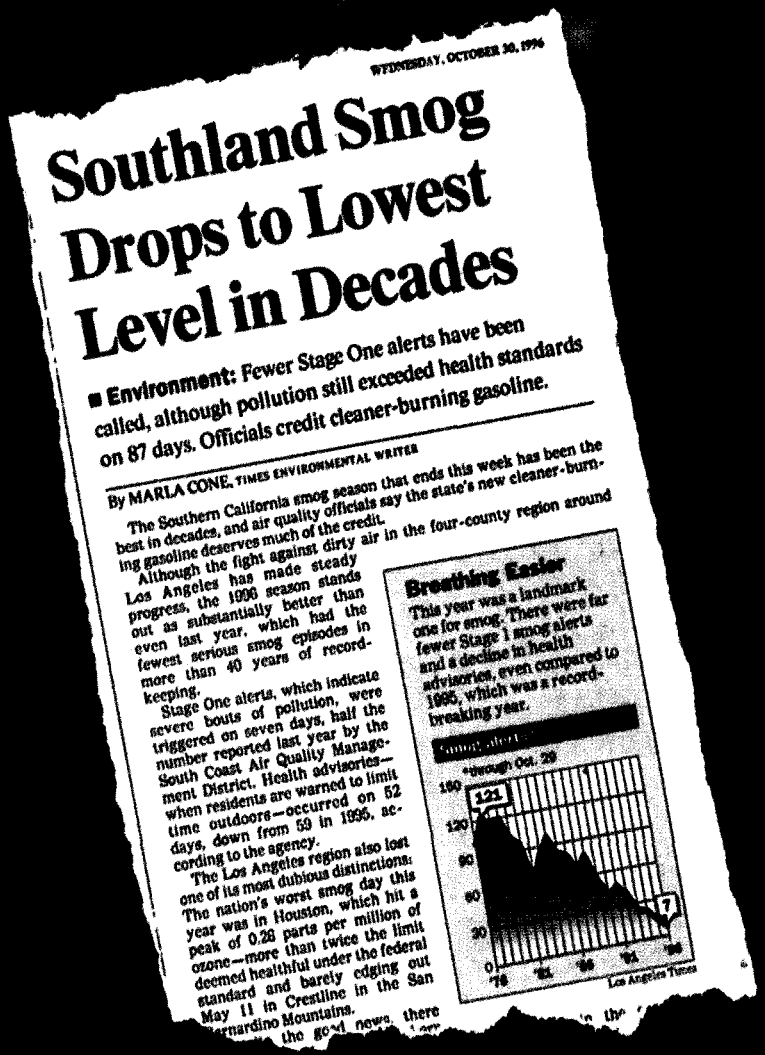

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1996

Southland Smog Drops to Lowest Level in Decades

■ Environment: Fewer Stage One alerts have been called, although pollution still exceeded health standards on 87 days. Officials credit cleaner-burning gasoline.

By MARLA CONE, TIMES ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

The Southern California smog season that ends this week has been the best in decades, and air quality officials say the state's new cleaner-burning gasoline deserves much of the credit.

Although the fight against dirty air in the four-county region around Los Angeles has made steady progress, the 1996 season stands out as substantially better than even last year, which had the fewest serious smog episodes in more than 40 years of record-keeping.

Stage One alerts, which indicate severe bouts of pollution, were triggered on seven days, half the number reported last year by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Health advisories—when residents are warned to limit time outdoors—occurred on 52 days, down from 59 in 1995, according to the agency.

The Los Angeles region also lost one of its most dubious distinctions: The nation's worst smog day this year was in Houston, which hit a peak of 0.28 parts per million of ozone—more than twice the limit deemed healthful under the federal standard and barely edging out May 11 in Crestline in the San Bernardino Mountains.

But the good news, there

Breathing Easier

This year was a landmark one for smog. There were far fewer Stage 1 smog alerts and a decline in health advisories, even compared to 1995, which was a record-breaking year.

Smog alert

*through Oct. 29

We were there at the beginning. In fact, we *were* the beginning.

This front-page story in the Los Angeles *Times* was good news for all of us. The air in Southern California is cleaner than it was years ago. In fact, cleaner than it was less than a year ago. Officials credit the reformulated gasoline required in California as of June 1, 1996. ARCO pioneered this fuel back in 1989. We're proud that it's chasing smog away, as it was designed to do. And we're thankful to government regulators, auto designers, and the conscientious driving public who have helped make cleaner air a reality, for today and days to come.

ARCO

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